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THE MOBILE ENTERTAINER'S MAGAZINE • WWW.MOBILEBEAT.COM

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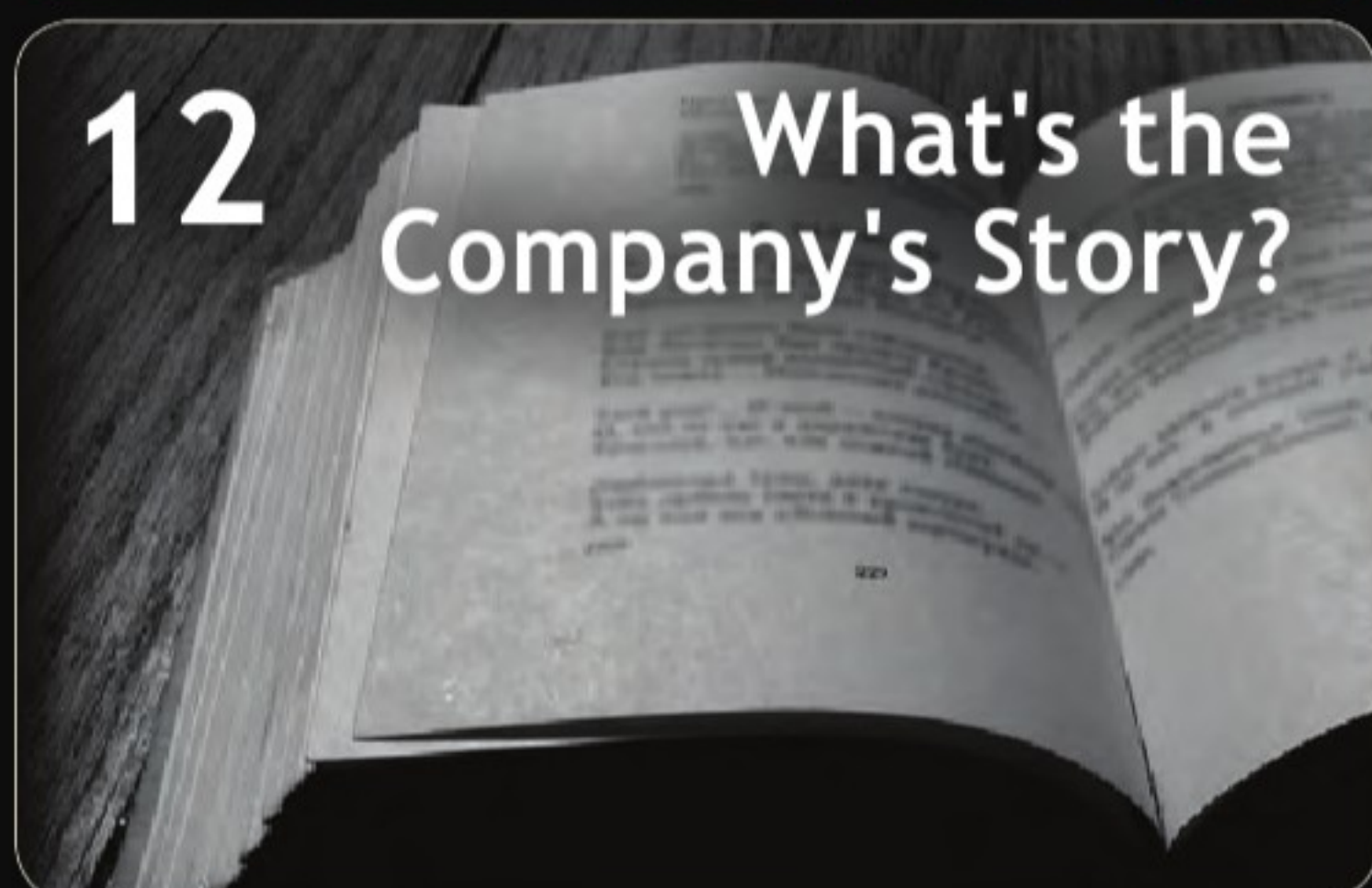
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HOLIDAY PARTY FUN

CORPORATE EVENT SUCCESS



10 How to Land Holiday Parties



12 What's the Company's Story?



14 Corporate Party Success Secrets



20 Holiday Tune Alternatives

STANDARD ARTIST

BING CROSBY

JOHNNY MERCER AND MARGARET WHITING

BRENDA LEE

BONNIE RAITT & CHARLES BROWN

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JOHN TRAVOLTA & OLIVIA NEWMAN

DIANA KRALL

ERIC CLAPTON AND SHERYL CROW

PRETENDERS

DEBBIE GIBSON

PLAYLIST

TRACK ONE	6
JUICE	8
News / Info	
MUSIC NEWS.....	8
Motown 25	
FEATURE.....	10
How to Land Holiday Parties	
By Joe Bunn	
CROWDPLEASER	12
What's the Company's Story?	
By Mike Ficher	
THE WEEKDAY GAME	14
Corporate Party Success Secrets	
By Rob Peters & Keith Alan	
WEDDING BEAT	16
What Makes a Wedding DJ Cheesy	
By DJ Staci Nichols	
YOUTH EVENT MASTERY	18
YES! In My Backyard (NIMBY)	
By Arnoldo Offermann	
PLAY SOMETHING WE CAN DANCE TO!	20
It's Always About the Outcome	
By Jay Maxwell	
PRO DJ FILES	22
♦ Naveen Sharma – 22	
♦ Chuck Lehnhard – 26	
INSIDE THE INDUSTRY	30
♦ Guitar Center's JC Faxas – 30	
SCOOPS	32
♦ Singo Music Bingo System – 32	
By Ryan Burger	
♦ Game Show Mania "On the Spot" – 32	
By Marc Andrews	
MOBILE BEAT DEALERS	34
Gear Stores Across the Nation	
FROM THE GROUND UP	36
Rebuilding from the Ground Up	
By Stu Chisholm	
THE SPIN DOCTOR.....	38
DJ Rescue	
By Mike "Dr. Frankenstand" Ryan	

CONTINUED...

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HERMANN STOWE JONES SHAPIRO FERRELL YAWN BUNN SCHENK DODGE HAGERMAN BUONACCORSO

PLAYLIST

EYE CANDY.....	39
♦ Blisslights Spright and Spright Move – 39	
E-BEAT	40
♦ Cross DJ Software by Mixvibes – 40	
By Michael Buonaccorso, Jr.	
♦ GoDJ Controller – 42	
By Aaron Burger and Ryan Burger	
♦ Spotify for DJs – 42	
By Marc Andrews	
SCOOPS	44
♦ Cerwin-Vega P-Series Powered Speakers – 44	
By Robert Lindquist	
♦ Electro-Voice ETX-10P Powered Speaker – 46	
By Jim Weisz	
♦ Behringer B615D Powered Speakers – 48	
By Robert Lindquist	
♦ Elite Screens Kestrel Stage Series – 50	
By Mobile Beat Staff	
BOOKSHELF	51
DJ Companion, New 6th Edition	
Review by By Joshua Wetmore	
EDJ WORKSHOP	52
Karaoke Technology, Part 2	
CARVING YOUR NICHE	56
How to Book Your Next Senior Gig	
By Jim Papa	
BUSINESS CHOPS™	58
How to Hold Their Attention	
By John Stiernberg	
KEEPIN' IT LEGAL.....	60
"Can I Sue My DJ?"	
By Rob Schenk	
DAVE SAYS, ON DJ BUSINESS.....	61
Buy the Building? / "No" to Partnership	
By Dave Ramsey	
BRILLIANT DEDUCTIONS	62
Advertising Deductions	
By Mark Battersby	
GITOMER ON SALES	64
"Close" the Sale?	
By Jeffrey Gitomer	
THE LAST WORD.....	66
We Both Win!	
By Jason Weldon	

TRACK ONE

It's still pretty hot as I write this. But even though the last blazing day of summer has yet to hit my Northeastern neighborhood, for entertainers everywhere, it is high time to consider the holiday season that will be here before we know it.

Of course, by now you hopefully have many (if not all) of your autumn/winter slots already filled. If not, though, we have some great ideas for landing those gigs from Joe Bunn. Ideas for rocking those holiday parties, with an accent on the corporate realm, come from Keith Alan and Rob Peters. Along with some interesting holiday music choices from Jay Maxwell, he also shares his wisdom on how to best approach any gig—with the end goal always in mind—helpfully using the corporate holiday party as his prime example. Plus, Mike Ficher shares some insightful ways to think about the content of your corporate events, by looking at the company's story.

Other content inside includes some great observations and suggestions from Staci Nichols on how to avoid the dreaded...cheesiness. Another highlight is Stu Chisholm's intro to his new column+blog, where he will be chronicling his complete over haul of his business. Plus tons of reviews, and other information you can really use!

– Dan Walsh, Editor-in-Chief

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MBLV: A Word from Mobile Beat Las Vegas Producer Mike Buonaccorso

In his latest blog post, Mark Cuban, entrepreneur and owner of the Dallas Mavericks, laid out some pointers on what it takes to be successful in your business. As we craft the new and different MOBILE BEAT LAS VEGAS, one of those pieces of advice jumped right out at me:

Always ask how you would design a solution if no current solution existed.

According to Cuban: "99.99 percent of the things we do in business are being done the way they have always been done. No one has reimagined how things should be done. That is what successful people do. Every situation they are in they take their knowledge of the business or situation they are visiting, whether it's buying a deck of playing cards, eating at a restaurant or trying to solve a problem and think about how to reinvent it. They



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don't ask people what they would want. They envision a complete reapplication. Then they decide what to do with what they just recreated."

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Mobile Beat Las Vegas returns, February 23-26, 2015, with what we hope to be an all-new experience for attendees. I will be joined by co-hosts Bill Hermann and Jason Jones as we strive to set a new standard for DJ gatherings.

MBLV promises a stellar lineup of presenters, including Mark Ferrell, Carr Hagermann, Brian Dodge, Gary Shapiro, Rob Schenk, Josh Yawn, Ben Stowe and Joe Bunn. Plus, more surprises are planned.

The results are going to be revolutionary. You'll want to be there...you won't want to miss a thing!

— Mike



Mobile Beat Las Vegas Producer Mike Buonaccorso co-founded the magazine in 1991 and established the Mobile Beat Show, which debuted at the Las Vegas Crowne Plaza, in January 1997.

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MUSIC NEWS

Motown 25: Yesterday, Today, Forever

When *Motown 25: Yesterday • Today • Forever* aired on NBC on May 16, 1983, it was an immediate sensation and became one of the most talked-about concerts and TV specials ever. In an era before social media, *Motown 25* was a true water-cooler event, marking the first time that music fans saw Michael Jackson do the moonwalk, as well as many other iconic performances. The show won a George Foster Peabody Award and an Emmy® Award for Best Variety Program, but has been unseen for over 20 years; until now. This fall, StarVista Entertainment / Time Life, in conjunction with de Passe Jones Entertainment and Berry Gordy's West Grand Media, is making this historic show available on DVD for the very first time.

Motown 25 was taped before a live audience and showcased virtually every Motown artist from

the company's inception to that point, including Michael Jackson, Marvin Gaye, Smokey Robinson, Stevie Wonder, Diana Ross, The Supremes, The Jackson 5, The Miracles, The Temptations, Four Tops and many others. The show also featured many guests outside the Motown Records sphere who had been influenced by Motown artists, including Linda Ronstadt, who performed a memorable duet with Smokey Robinson, Jose Feliciano and British new wave star Adam Ant, who was then riding a wave of MTV popularity. The historic evening was hosted by Richard Pryor, arguably the hottest comedian in the world at the time.

This seminal event in pop culture

history went on to provide the backstory for the Tony®-nominated Broadway show, *Motown: The Musical*. StarVista Ent. / Time Life will make this once-in-a-lifetime concert available to music lovers in several different configurations, which will be available exclusively online at www.Motown25DVDs.com. The deluxe 6-DVD set features an extended version of the show, with over 20 additional minutes not seen on the original broadcast, 5.1 surround sound, and nine newly-produced featurettes including behind-the-scenes material. Over 25 exclusive interviews with performers and crew are featured, including Claudette Robinson (The Miracles), Martha Reeves (Martha & the Vandellas), Smokey Robinson, and many more.

Also included in the deluxe collector's box is an exclusive 48-page collector's booklet packed with artist info, production materials and never-before-seen photos from the show.

"*Motown 25* was a labor of love for all of us involved..." said Suzanne de Passe, the executive producer of the TV show and overseer of the DVD release. "...It was such a magical night of music and memories. The fans of Motown old or new will have a great time." **MB**





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How to Land Holiday Parties

SERIOUS STRATEGIES TO PROFIT FROM THE FUN

By Joe Bunn

Ok DJs, the year is half over and you know what that means, right? It's time to get moving on booking holiday parties!

If you are like us, the majority of those are events for companies. As someone that loves marketing my DJ company, I want to share with you some ideas for rounding up that holiday party money.

Some of you may have heard me speak before at Mobile Beat Las Vegas (and if you haven't, you can catch me in February 2015—shameless plug). I usually speak about marketing or things that you can do

such as company picnics, team building, "bring the kids to work" day, weekend outings, and of course holiday parties. Go get that budgeted money!

I am not personally a member of BNI (Business Network International), but I have several friends in other jobs such as insurance sales, chiropractors, etc. that thrive there. This is taken directly from their website at www.bni.com: "Last year alone, members of BNI passed 5.4 million referrals...which generated over \$6.5 billion dollars' worth of business for its members! BNI is a business and professional networking organization that allows only one person per professional classification or specialty to

them to call or email us (add phone number and email address). We would love to rock it! Thanks" See! That's so easy right? Do it again a few weeks later. You'll be surprised at how many bookings could come from doing that on Facebook or Twitter. Now, since Instagram is photo based, you have to get a little more creative. That's where picmonkey.com comes in. If you aren't using it, you're welcome, I just gave you a great tip for cranking out easy little graphics. Go to Google images and grab a shot of some holiday lights, add some text to it, and post that little gem on Instagram and add text similar to what's above and wait for the phone to ring!

Joe Bunn & Mike Walter are hosting The PhDJ Workshop in Raleigh, NC on Nov. 4th & 5th, 2014. Visit www.phdjworkshop.com for more information.

to better yourself as a DJ and improve your business. Normally, I am speaking in terms of weddings because that is how we make the majority of our money. In writing this article, however, I am going to focus more on the corporate sector—and this game plan is entirely different than the wedding one.

So, I am a big fan of joining organizations such as NACE (National Association of Catering & Events) and ISES (International Special Events Society). Joining them isn't enough, you have to go to the meetings, be on a committee or even join the board. I can't tell you how much those organizations have helped my wedding business. They have helped my corporate business a little, but not nearly as much as joining my local Chamber of Commerce and Shop Local Raleigh. These groups are where corporations send their folks to network. As a DJ, the negative is that a lot of the networking things are early in the morning (ugh). But, if you get up, pound some coffee and get out there with your stack of cards and your amazing personality, you will tap into a huge network of companies that will eventually need your services. These companies allot money for employee entertainment; things

join a chapter." I would suggest you seek out a chapter in your area if you are looking to book more corporate/holiday business!

If you follow me on any of the social media channels, you know I'm very active on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Did you know that you can expand your reach and use these tools to book more shows? It doesn't matter if you have 200 friends or 2,000, not all of them have a job as cool as yours; they work for someone. And if that company has the money, they are going to throw a holiday blowout for their employees. They're going to need a great DJ, and you're going to book it!

The process is really simple. Don't flood their news feed with requests, but just toss out something like "Hey friends, can you believe the year is half over? Well you know what that means...the holidays are right around the corner! If the company you are working for is having a party, please tell

Around this time of year another good idea is to look back at last December and check out all of the shows that you did. Hopefully, the contact person has already contacted you to lock down this December, but if they haven't, get proactive! Get on the phone or email and tell them that you're booking up fast and if they want a party like last year's, then they need to go ahead and sign a contract and send in a deposit! That may or may not be true, but a little white lie never hurt anyone. Sometimes you have to create a sense of urgency to get the folks in the corporate sector moving.

The last tip that I can suggest, especially when dealing with large, Fortune 500 corporations is to watch your mouth. I'm not talking about cursing, I'm talking about what you say on the phone or at the consultation when talking to the person in charge of the event. The majority of them have employees that practice different types of religion. I never answer the phone and say, "Let's talk about your Christmas party!" That in itself is a foul. The term is always going to be holiday party unless they correct you otherwise.

Now go out there and get those holiday parties booked! Good luck! **MB**



Joe Bunn started his DJ career at age 14, when his mom drove him to gigs in her wood-paneled Jeep Wagoneer. His company now does about 400 weddings a year and another 200+ private, corporate and charity events. He has been on the board of both ISES and NACE, founded the Triangle DJ Association, and has also won numerous industry awards. Recently, he has been helping other DJs grow their businesses as a consultant. He has also presented at major industry events including MBLV. For more info go to www.bunndjcompany.com.

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What's the Company's Story?

MAKE A MEMORABLE EVENT: PRESENT A PARTY WITH A PLOT

By Mike Ficher

While the annual report offers the cold numbers, the dry text, and the spun explanation of the year, in some respects, the company holiday party presents a more realistic assessment of the mood and culture of the organization for the year. Want the real story of the company's year? Attend the holiday party!

That awareness can significantly impact how a mobile entertainer approaches a holiday corporate event—and generates opportunity.



THE STORY OF THE YEAR

Mobile disc jockeys have many names for events—jobs, gigs, shows, performances, engagements...but, particularly, company holiday parties lend themselves much more aptly to the designation: "story."

Much like a television show or movie, each company has a story to be told with, typically, multiple arcs experienced during the year.

Was the year profitable? Tumultuous? Eventful? A merger? Acquisition? Sale? Upper management personnel changes? A product introduction? Significant growth? Adopting or understanding that perspective can aid mobile jocks in increasing the opportunity for a successful and singular event by leveraging the timeless power of a story.

A RICH TRADITION

Long before videotape and digital storage allowed the world to record our every moment, mundane or monumental, for posterity, elders employed stories to pass on history and impart critical moral and social lessons to future generations. In fact, the Old Testament is a collection of

stories and parables to illustrate points. Native American history has been passed from generation to generation via verbal storytelling rather than written documentation. Storytelling flourishes in the Yangzi delta region of China where the chantefable—medieval tales of adventure employing alternating sung and spoken verses—is still a rich and popular tradition.

So, what is a story?

According to Tim Sheppard, a storyteller, teacher and historian in England, "There is no consensus, and it is extraordinarily hard to come up with any good definition, long or short."

While storytellers as a group have declined, and cannot categorically define their avocation, no such quandary exists about the power of an engaging and entertaining story.

"Good storytelling can be powerful, transporting, and magical, and most tellers agree that this can only fully happen in live performance," says Sheppard.

YES, THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT

However, like any other tool in the DJ bag of tricks, the focus must be consistent.

"The skill that is the most important for a story-teller is to entertain," Randy Bartlett, the pioneering owner of Premier Entertainment in Sacramento, CA offers. "It doesn't matter how good the story is if nobody listens to it. People have a very short attention span, so you need to keep them hooked."

"Humor is the best tool to do that, so learn to add APPROPRIATE humor to everything to keep people hooked."

Bartlett, an avid storyteller himself, and author of *The 1% Solution*, offers some time-tested words of wisdom to develop sound storytelling skills:

"DJs can improve their understanding (of stories) by paying attention to what keeps their interest...If they watch a movie, play, TV show or concert, what keeps them interested? Analyze what's going on."

"We're in the entertainment industry, yet most DJs don't recognize the simplest entertainment issues. Where you stand, how you move, your posture, your expression, your inflection are very important to telling a good story."

"PRACTICE! REHEARSE. It's amazing that DJs won't rehearse because they 'don't need to' but the world's best actors, comedians, athletes, singers and musicians all practice and rehearse."

TO BE OR NOT TO BE

So what is the company's story? Ask, research, suggest ways to tell the story of the company's year through video, audio, skits, and multimedia. Such an approach might make the event into an indelible memory for those in attendance.

And, that's my story and, well, I'm sticking to it. **MB**



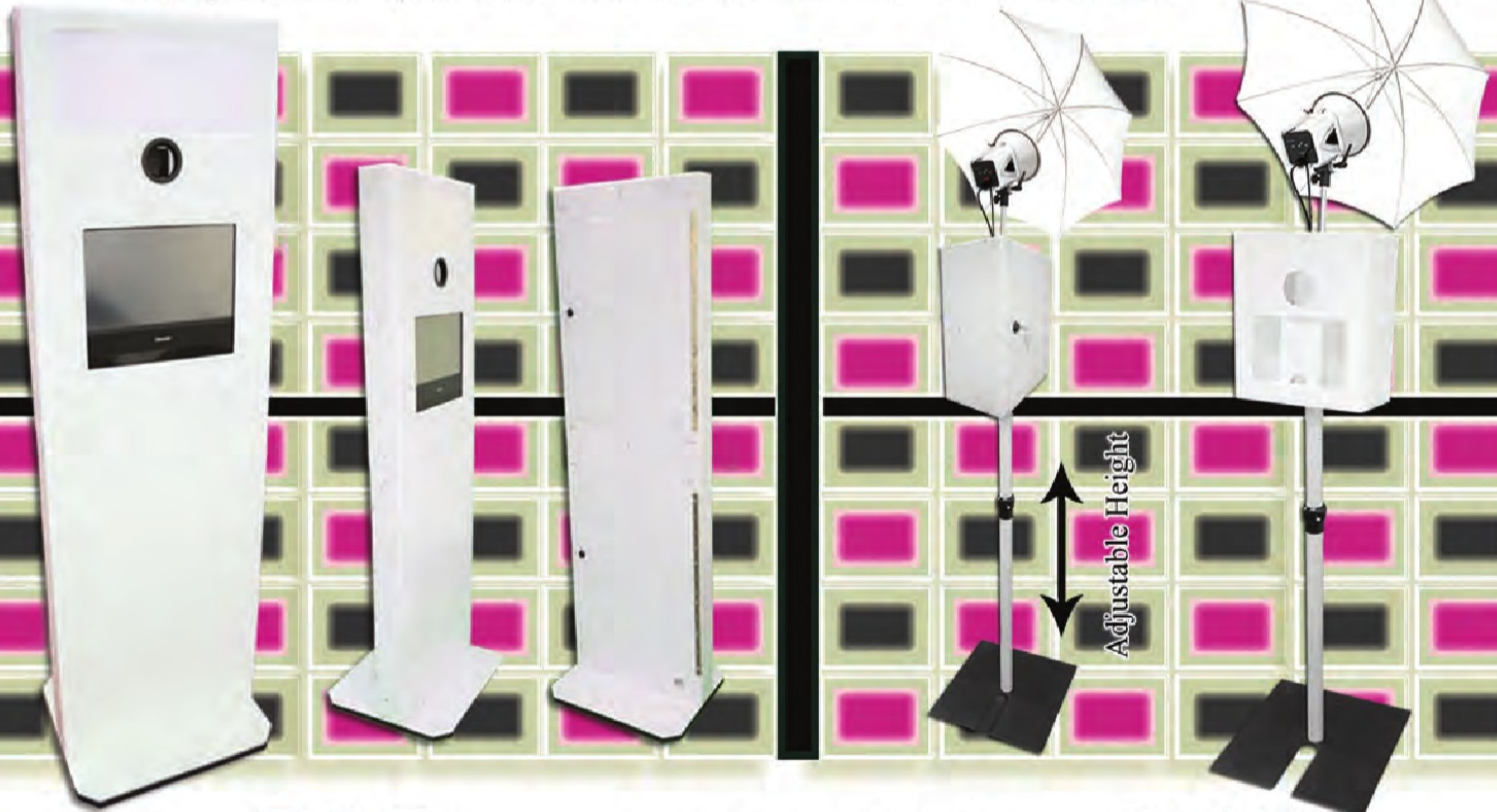
A business analyst by day, Mike Ficher is an actor, voice artist, MC, sportscaster, public address announcer and former mobile entertainer. He is also the host of the weekly syndicated radio program, *The Ultimate Oldies Show*. Mike synthesizes these varied experiences to illuminate historic connectivity and fresh perspectives on the mobile entertainment profession. More info at mikeficher.com.

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CHINO HILLS, CA

Corporate Party Success Secrets

By Rob Peters & Keith Alan



Let's turn the clocks back for a minute: It's the mid 1990s and the economy is going strong. Companies are going gang busters on holiday parties! There are parties Sunday through Saturday and it seems that no matter the size of the company, they're throwing a party. Then comes 2001: The bubble bursts, due to a variety of factors...resulting in company cutbacks, and a general change in certain corporate cultures.

Fast-forward to 2014. The corporate scene has improved over the last few years and companies are doing better. There are again lots of golden opportunities to boost your mid-week income. Now that you are gearing up for this year's holiday season, this is the right place to learn about how you can take advantage of them. As disc jockeys, we are always happy to get the parties where they want holiday music and dancing. But what happens when the client says they want something different? Karaoke and holiday trivia are always fun. If you're looking for something new and fresh, take a good look at DigiGame's Extreme Bingo program. This can be customized to play bingo with holiday music, providing a great addition to entice that corporate client.

Speaking of something different, how about building more fun into ANY holiday party event (weekday or not) by adding a game or two to your performance. In most cases, employees at holiday parties are sitting at tables with their guests and/or colleagues. You can really start or enhance the fun by adding a "table vs table"-style competition during dinner or cocktail hour. These types of activities should involve an element where the people at each table work together to receive points, or win the competition. And they can be simple, such as "Name That Tune", holiday trivia or even a scavenger hunt.

Another way to get some mid-week income is to work with some of your favorite banquet facilities. They would love the mid-week opportunities too! As the owner of Keith Alan Productions here in Connecticut, I work closely with three or four venues for the holiday season. We help promote "Small Business Parties," or some call them "Combo Parties."

Here is how they work: The venue will host a holiday party and small companies that wouldn't normally have the means to throw a nice party for their employees, can purchase one table or ten tables. Then, the venue hires me as the "in-house" entertainment for the event. There could be as few as four companies or as many as 25

companies at the same party. We've done these events over the past 20 years and they lead to a lot of additional revenue. You never know who will be attending.

Speaking of employee appreciation, we at Rob Peters Entertainment have found great success in offering "in-house" holiday entertainment, where we go to a specific company's office or location and provide entertainment services for them. These events are usually during the week at lunch time. The company usually has these events catered in house, and there are a variety of options that you can offer. As Keith said, there are plenty of possibilities.

Using the above model, we offer team building events for companies. The holiday season is a great time for companies to show their appreciation to their employees, and these shows can be offered to companies who are having a luncheon or party for their employees. We divide the employees into teams as they arrive at the event, and throughout a two- or three-hour period, they eat and participate in a variety of games and activities and earn points. Each member of the winning team receives a small trophy or gold medal in an award ceremony.

So how do you get these events or increase your corporate event bookings? Well, the facilities that refer you should know what you offer. Also, consider exhibiting at a chamber of commerce business expo or trade show. Another great area is networking... making quality connections with people who you know who may know people that may be interested in your services is HUGE in the corporate and holiday party market. It may take a while to see results, but there are plenty of companies and organizations that are looking for entertainment that is new and different.

Another great way to add some weekday revenue is with the senior citizens, especially during the holiday season. The holiday season can be a very depressing time of the year for our senior citizens. The number of senior centers that are looking for entertainment is off the charts! They are always looking for ways to entertain their members. For the guys that host karaoke, this should be a no brainer. No drunks, no spilled drinks and home by 2:00 IN THE AFTERNOON. Also, the bingo program will work here as well. Reach out to the activities director at your local nursing home or assisted living facility. [For a lot more senior-oriented ideas, check out Jim Papa's "Carving Your Niche" column in previous issues, and on p. 56. -Ed.]

You may not get rich doing these events, but if you're like us, any extra income that will increase the bottom line works...especially during the week! **MB**



Keith Alan has been in the DJ biz since 1975, started hosting weddings in 1982 and went full-time in 1993. While hosting over 60 weddings a year on the weekends, his mid-week programs generate income through out the year. Outside of the weddings division of Keith Alan Productions, Keith's summer program, Campardy™ has grown from 1 event in 2000, to 75 events within a 6 week window! He is busy with game shows, trivia, photo booths and extreme bingo the other 46 weeks of the year.



*For over 25 years, Rob Peters has been entertaining audiences of all ages, at weddings, corporate events, kids' parties and more. Rob started DJing in 1987 and went full time in 1998. He began doing kids' events in 2006, and now performs for over 100 weekday parties each summer. He is the co-owner of Rob Peters Entertainment in Braintree, MA, and runs Bubble Parties, a business program that helps DJs increase their youth event revenue. He is also a seminar presenter and author of *The Business Of Mobile DJing* from ProDJ Publishing.*

CLASSIC TUNES				
FIVE BUSBY AND THE MASTER MUSKETS - SPRING THE MOON	SHANIA TWAIN - HAVIN' A PARTY	BRITTANY SPEARS - TOXIC	LIL JON - GET LOW	USHER - YEAH
DIAMOND RIO - ONE MORE DAY	GEORGIA SATELLITES - CHANGE IN MY POCKET	HOUND DOG - ELVIS	UNCHAINED MELODY - MELISSA	RIGHT THUR - CHINGY
FRANKIE CARLE - MISSOURI WALTZ	U GOT IT BAD - USHER	VAN MORRISON - BROWN EYED GIRL	PLEASE REMEMBER ME - TIM MCGRAW	HEY BABY - NO DOUBT W/BOUNTY KILLER
PAINTED - SOFT ELL	ANGEL - SHAGGY	50 CENT - CANDY SHOP (EDITED VERSION)	JAMES BROWN - I FEEL GOOD	PAT BENETAR - HIT ME WITH YOUR BEST SHOT
Y EYE USE - TOWN	SHOUT - OTIS DAY	COWBOY JUNKIES - RIVER WALTZ	WHENEVER, WHEREEVER - SHAKIRA	GEORGE CHAMBERS - BUNNY HOP

CLASSIC TUNES				
DIAMOND RIO - ONE MORE DAY	U GOT IT BAD - USHER	VAN MORRISON - BROWN EYED GIRL	PLEASE REMEMBER ME - TIM MCGRAW	HEY BABY - NO DOUBT W/BOUNTY KILLER
PAINTED - SOFT ELL	ANGEL - SHAGGY	50 CENT - CANDY SHOP (EDITED VERSION)	JAMES BROWN - I FEEL GOOD	PAT BENETAR - HIT ME WITH YOUR BEST SHOT
Y EYE USE - TOWN	SHOUT - OTIS DAY	COWBOY JUNKIES - RIVER WALTZ	WHENEVER, WHEREEVER - SHAKIRA	GEORGE CHAMBERS - BUNNY HOP

CLASSIC TUNES				
IN DA CLUB - 50 CENT	ALISON KRAUSE - WHEN YOU SAY NOTHING AT ALL	BEE GEES - STAYIN' ALIVE	PAT BENETAR - HIT ME WITH YOUR BEST SHOT	THE DAY THE MUSIC DIED (JAMES BROWN)
DJ OTZI - HEY BABY	GWEN STEFANI - IF I WAS A RICH GIRL	NEIL DIAMOND - SWEET CAROLINE	QUAD CITY DJ'S - COME ON RIDE IT	I WILL SURVIVE - THE NOTORIOUS B.I.G.
LOS DEL RIO - MACARINA	TRAVIS TRITT - BEST OF INTENTIONS	CHEAP TRICK - I WANT YOU TO WANT ME	NELLY - HOT IN HERE	HERO - ENRIQUE IGLESIAS
EVANESCEN CE - MY IMMORTAL	VILLAGE PEOPLE - YMCA	COWBOY JUNKIES - RIVER WALTZ	YING YANG TWIN - SALT SHAKER	SIMON AND GARFUNKLE - CECILIA
JAMES BROWN - I FEEL GOOD	52 TAINTED LOVE - SOFT CELL	NEIL DIAMOND - SWEET CAROLINE	MAGIC STICK - 50 CENT	UNBELIEVAB LE - EMF
		REDNEX - COTTON EYED JOE	BEATLES TWIST AND SHOUT	LOS DEL RIO - RICK INGFIE JESSY'S GIRL
		RIGHT THUR - CHINGY	JOAN JETT LOVE RO AND R	

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SOFTWARE

EXTREME FUN
EXTREME INCOME
EXTREME BINGO

CLASSIC TUNES				
POUR SOME SUGAR ON ME - DEF LEOPARD	B-52'S - LOVE SHACK	TRAVIS TRITT - BEST OF INTENTIONS	U GOT IT BAD - USHER	HOUND DOG - ELVIS
SHOUT - OTIS DAY	BLUE SUEDE SHOES - ELVIS	NO DOUBT - HELLO GOOD (KEEP ON DANCING)	JOHN DENVER - THANK GOD I'M A COUNTRY BOY	SIR MIX A LOT - BABY GOT BACK (I LIKE BIG BUTTS)
NELLY - HOT IN HERE	STROKIN' - CLARENCE CARTER	RIGHT THUR - CHINGY	ABBA - DANCING QUEEN	ELECTRIC BOOGIE (SLIDE)... MARCIA GRIFFITHS
WITHOUT ME - EMINEM	COWBOY - KID ROCK	VAN MORRISON - BROWN EYED GIRL	PAT BENETAR - HIT ME WITH YOUR BEST SHOT	MIAMI - WILL SMITH

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What Makes a Wedding DJ Cheesy

AND HOW NOT TO SPREAD IT

By DJ Staci Nichols



“**C**heesy” is the current buzzword among brides when it comes to wedding DJ shopping. There are wedding DJ businesses built around the entire concept of being non-cheesy (such as Stephanie and Jeff Padovani’s DJ Solution). Wedding DJ Mike Stephenson of IHateWeddingDJs.com claims to “prevent musical tragedies,” not be a “clown telling jokes,” and promises not to “blemish the most important night of your life.” And he’s not ashamed to announce that DJs are embarrassing.

CHEESE IS IN THE EYE OF THE BEHOLDER

In April, I DJ’d a wedding in which I read the couple’s love story, did a lengthy Grand Entrance, and then was asked by the couple two days before the wedding to dismiss guests for the buffet by quizzing them on the details of the love story and Grand Entrance. (“Our coordinator said it would be fun!”) I advised the couple, who wanted to keep the wedding casual, that dismissing tables and interrupting the small crowd every three minutes to grill them with questions was going to make things very structured...which is only one nudge away from cheesy.

My clients wanted to proceed anyway. As their wedding dinner wound to an end, I thought, “These people hate me! I would be hating me if I were them.” So I was understandably shocked to read the bride’s review of me on The Knot: “One thing that I think is unique about Staci’s services (which we really appreciated) was that during the event she was more like a club DJ than a ‘cheesy’ wedding DJ. She kept her announcements to a minimum (per our request) and just let the music speak for itself...” What?! (FYI. I did not beatmix at this wedding.) But she was ecstatic that during open dancing the only time I got on the mic was to announce the cake cutting and send-off. That’s all it took for me to “be cool.”

SO WHAT MAKES A WEDDING DJ CHEESY?

Regardless of what you’re wearing, how old you are, your gender, or the music you play, the single biggest factor that makes a wedding DJ cheesy, in my opinion, is being forceful or pushy with the crowd. While, yes, the shiny red vest under the tux needs to go, and, yes, the “Hokey Pokey” doesn’t help, all of those things can be overlooked. I don’t think games in and of themselves are cheesy, but I think games get a bad rap because guests are basically told, “We’re all doing this—yes—including you. Come on. It’ll be fun.” I think wedding DJs can easily become confused because guests may smile and laugh throughout a forced activity...to be polite and supportive of the newlyweds—not because they’re actually having fun. But let’s not forget our basic psychology: Nobody likes to be told what to do. Period.

WE READ THE CROWD WITH MUSIC CHOICE—WHY NOT WITH INTERACTION CHOICE?

We talk about our superiority over iPods because we can read the crowd with our music selection. So then, why are we not reading the crowd with our “activities” selection too? When a dinner crowd is at a dull roar and already tipsy on their own, why interrupt them to explain rules for a game or instructions for a dance? Rules and instructions are a buzzkill—especially at a party. If you are pre-scheduling your interactive activities, you may not be in the right place at the right time, causing your

activity to be seen as—you guessed it—cheesy.

MONICA'S PARTY VS. JOEY AND CHANDLER'S PARTY

For me, I use the "*Friends*" standard to determine if something I'm contemplating doing is going to be a cliché, cheesy party-killer or a fun success to talk about for years to come. Remember the episode "The One with Two Parties," where both Monica and Joey/Chandler have birthday parties for Rachel? Monica's party has a food committee, coasters for the drinks, structured games with directions and rules, and everyone is just quietly sitting instead of mingling. Joey and Chandler's party is loud, free of rules and



DJ and Minister Staci Nichols owns Revolution Weddings and Country Wedding DJ in southern California. Her wedding know-how has appeared on Wed Loft, Offbeat Bride, the Gig Masters Wedding Blog, and Brides Without Borders. She is available for DJ consulting with a focus on helping her male counterparts make their websites/services more bride-friendly.

coasters, everyone is mingling and drinking. Everyone at Monica's boring party wants to be smuggled across the hall to where the real action is. I can't imagine Joey and Chandler putting on a structured dance contest or telling everyone to "hush up" while they explain any sort of lengthy, forced group activity.

There are, of course, many schools of thought on what makes a wedding DJ "cheesy," and my ideas, while based on practical experience and observation, are just one of those schools. Write in and tell us anonymously (or not) what you think the cheese factor is. We look forward to hearing your responses. (Please email them to webmaster@mobilebeat.com. **MB**)

Cheese-Free Tips

Avoid telling a wedding crowd they must participate in anything

Offer interactive activities that are completely voluntary (such as a photo booth, putting a box of fun party props on the edge of the dance floor instead of tossing them to guests like Mardi Gras beads (with apologies to Randy Bartlett), or dancing The Wobble on the corner of the dance floor without a mic and, if guests come over to you and try to follow along, you can announce the steps as you do them with just your natural voice)

If you need to get guests involved in something (i.e. a Dollar Dance), be very clear that this is for the happy newlyweds who appreciate their attendance so very much. So phrases like, "I need everyone to come to the dance floor" are to be avoided. Instead say, "The bride and groom are so grateful you are all here celebrating their special day with them. It would mean so much to them if you could..."

Avoid asking guests to make spectacles of themselves. While it may be entertaining to the audience, it's not appropriate for an elegant affair, nor is it hospitable on the part of the host (you). So no more, "Oh, by the way, you're up here at the DJ booth because I'm going to make you compete in a lip sync/dancing/singing/air guitar contest."

Cheese-Free Interactions

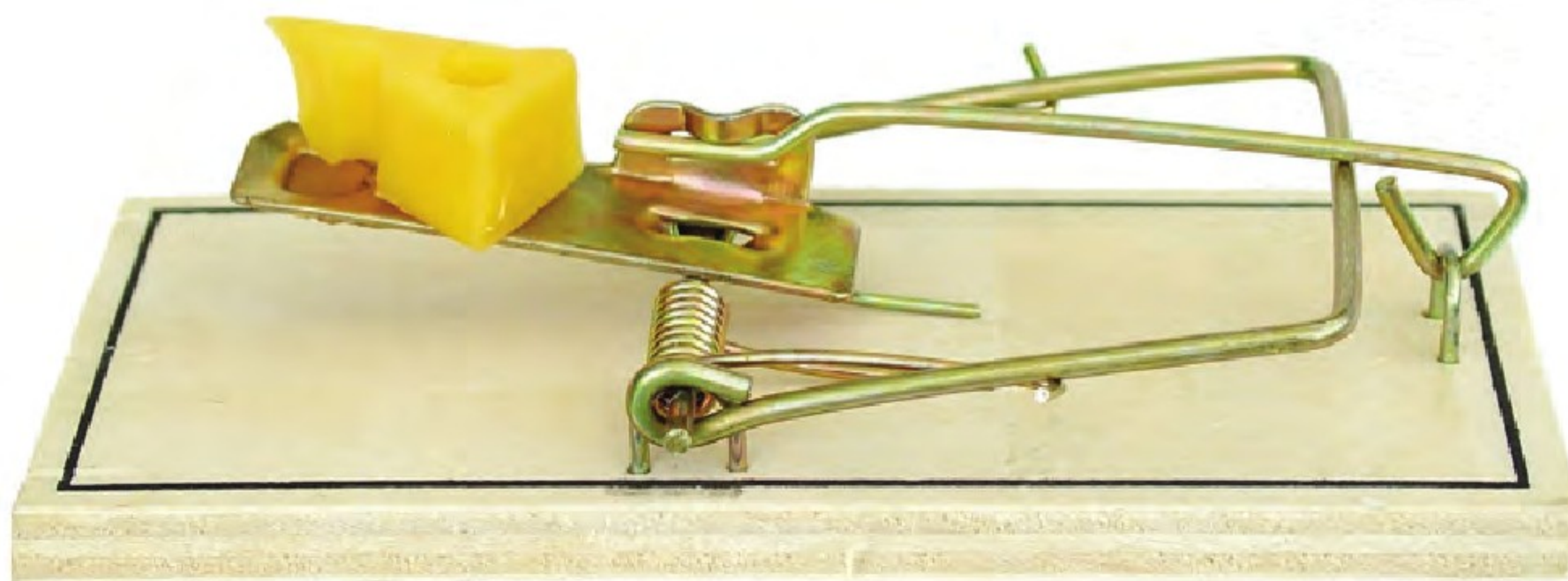
Have a group photo taken on the dance floor immediately before open dancing. This is my favorite trick ever: The guests can clearly see the photo is for the couple (not for you), the guests feel appreciated and involved knowing a photograph of them was desired, thus the barrier of "getting out of the dinner chair" is no longer a reason not to dance or mingle, and the couple gets a really cool photo. Oh, and you just got everyone on the dance floor right before dancing ...without being cheesy or pushy.

Schedule the First Dance as the last thing before open dancing. Have the guests circle up around the couple during their First Dance (possibly holding candles or blowing bubbles—which they aren't so stubborn about doing because they can easily see this is about making it special for the newlyweds). Again, you now have everyone on the dance floor as you're going to be starting the dance music.

-Photo booths/Polaroid stations.

"Mad Libs" on the guests' place settings.

Invite a five- to ten-year-old guest to help you DJ. Announce, "Hey everyone, little Michael/Michaela here is going to be playing the next song for you." Cue the ohh-ing and ahh-ing, then the cheering, as he or she hits play. (I give the child a brief explanation of my equipment and DJ software as a parent stands by—they love it!)



YES! In My Backyard (NIMBY)

**YOU—AND ONLY YOU—
DETERMINE WHAT IS
COOL FOR YOU**

By Arnoldo Offermann

Photo by Calvin Hunt

Too many times I hear "NIMBY!" For those of you not in the know, NIMBY is a whamby-pamby-whiny-baby-boo-hoo excuse that people use when they haven't raised the bar in some aspect of business. Do I believe every market is different? Yes! Do I believe the consumer dictates the pricing of DJs or the overall climate of our industry? Hell to the NO.

But what about the overall performance? I've had the pleasure to be the DJ for other DJs' weddings, both locally and nationally. I've been told several NIMBY-type things, and each time I rocked the performance. "HEY! I'M AWESOME" isn't the point of this article, but it leads me to the next point: The stance I took on performance, that groupthink always works the same way, has made me a better DJ for corporate parties, where oftentimes people from all over the place fly in.

So first, what is groupthink?

Merriam-Webster defines it as follows:

Groupthink: a pattern of thought characterized by self-deception, forced manufacture of consent, and conformity to group values and ethics.

Arnoldo's DJ dictionary adds to the definition:

Groupthink: If you get a good percentage of the group REALLY excited about a song, those who "don't get it" will feel like losers. They'd rather pretend than lose momentum.

I see it happen all the time, especially with local songs. A group "gets" the song and another group doesn't. If that group

is loud enough, the other group will join in on the fun...if groupthink doesn't "activate" then people may walk off the floor. With that being said, I don't believe in NIMBY. I can rock a party "Florida-style" no matter where I'm at. I've done events for other DJs in Ohio, Kansas City, Virginia—you name it. The results were all the same. At no point did I feel that I was in any different of an area.

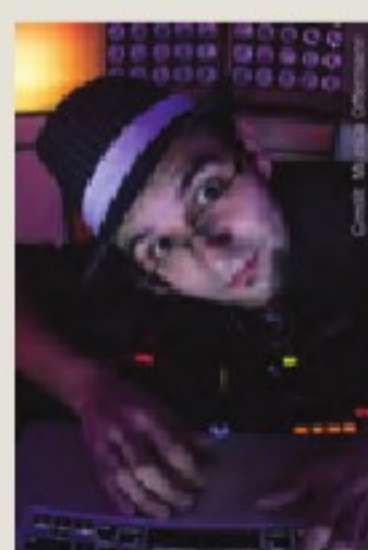
Alas, I still hear it, to the point of an argument. How can someone argue something when I have experienced—nay, have VIDEO proving otherwise is true? Best of all, NIMBY has been told to me by many friends, so I know that this is something that plagues the minds of many, sometimes even myself. Let's go over the four points of a performance that I've been told NIMBY on, and why I believe it's horsedockery. If you'd like to disagree with me, yell at the magazine, even spank it...because that has just as good of a chance of convincing me otherwise. ;)

The following four are based on real quotes I have been told:

Everyone here uses a façade and spandex covers. it's expected.

Ironically enough, a couple of times I did use a façade, actually... almost every time. Not because vendors expected it, but because the DJ company I rented from used it. When I'm out of state I talk to these vendors and I ask them what they think. There is ZERO rule or standard that anywhere "requires" the use of a façade, or covering a pencil with a bed sheet. Instead, it has become a "standard" set by DJs because they want their setup to look cleaner. Nothing wrong with wanting a nice neat setup, but those events where I had a façade made the setup look like the next event I did in a different state. Completely different companies in completely different states, and yet setups looked the same because of a façade. Now, I'm not knocking them, because they did look good... but when I came back, it just made me work harder to make my setup stand out even more.

First impressions are key in this business, and if my setup LOOKS different than the "standard," then you can bet your you-know-what that people will take notice. The two companies I worked with recently, Fuze Entertainment and Top Sound Mobile Entertainment both use façade and both understand that many others do, too. Thus they incorporated lighting and truss to dis-



Arnoldo Offermann is the creator of the video series **Master School Dances** and author of **R U Rockin' with the Best?!** He has helped DJs worldwide become market leaders in school dances. In a soft economy flooded with \$500 school dance DJs, Arnoldo enjoys watching 4SchoolsOnly yield dances of 10-20x that price tag. Learn more about his wildly successful series packed with ideas that actually work at www.MasterSchoolDances.com.

tinguish their brand from the competition. Kudos.

Music here is different. People don't like remixes. People don't like too many throwbacks. People like only Top 40 or commonly known songs.

Erm. What? Yea, I agree that different regions are heavy on a taste of music. I guarantee you Texas has a different set of local charts than Florida does, but the national charts still exist for a reason. At these out-of-state events I was at, I dropped a playlist similar to that which I would have here in Florida...and the reactions were what I was used to. In a couple of them, the crowds reacted even better. I'm not saying PLAY OBSCURE MUSIC, but I'll be damned if someone in America doesn't know "This is How We Do It." There are songs that span the entire country, whether you like them or not. Are they the most popular song in your region? Maybe, maybe not. But like everything else, if it's mixed in at the right time, your crowd will know what to do.

Don't mix like you do in Florida. The crowds here like the songs played all the way.

BULL. CRAP. I don't care where you go, the two main rules of people in general still apply: 1) People have a short attention span. 2) They do pay enough attention to notice if you mix out before the good part.

There is a HUGE debate about mixing fast vs letting the whole song ride, but that's not important here. What IS important is that I have a comfort level with how I mix and I've also integrated it into my brand. I'm not going to change how I've done something just because I'm being told NIMBY. So far, so good. Being next

to Disney, I always get corporate events where people from all over the world fly in. I mix in the style that's helped develop and establish my brand and people will still have a good time.

Yeah, well, the way you hype really won't work here.

Oh yeah, I know what you mean. I saw how Aerosmith changed their performance at every location they did. Ok ok ok—we're not Aerosmith. Ok, fine. So, is there merit to this NIMBY thought? Nah—otherwise *American Idol* would have an MC for each state. This is seriously one of the most ludicrous statements I've heard. I feel 100% about this, after performing for an international group of student council members, who all reacted the very same way as I played the role of DJ/MC. Will everyone appreciate your style? No—but that has nothing to do with location. Just as with everything else, if you're 100% confident, that attitude will shine through and help create a stellar performance.

Each of the above points by itself isn't supposed to be some sort of mind-blowing experience for you, but the article as a whole is my way of saying "your performance is your brand." Once you establish it, don't change it despite the location. Make it work for you! And not only is your performance your brand, it's your marketing too. Yes, you may need to tweak something here and there, but NOT as dramatically as the NIMBYers are saying. Not one successful company changes their marketing as a whole based solely on state.

But you know who does? Politicians. Let that be some food for thought. **MB**



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It's Always About the Outcome

FOCUS ON THE TRUE GOAL: A PARTY TO REMEMBER

By Jay Maxwell

Regardless of the profession, many individuals emphasize the attributes of their tools. Photographers might showcase their cameras, landscapers could brag about their lawnmowers and, of course mobile disc jockeys have a tendency to boast about their equipment. Clearly, having the right tools is essential to doing a job well. However, simply having the fanciest equipment doesn't guarantee a successful outcome, especially if the operator is inexperienced or doesn't understand the desires of the client.

If a landscaper uses his new mower to cut a client's grass, yet cuts it too short or loses control and mows down a row of tulips that had just begun to bloom, the outcome is clearly disastrous. As a mobile disc jockey, I certainly use professional equipment and would recommend the same to other pros; we should always have reliable tools of the trade. But it may not be necessary to buy the most expensive or highest tech devices.

The outcome of the event should be the most important focus. The mobile DJ should at all times remember that the objective is people-oriented. The ultimate goal is to satisfy clients and their guests. The equipment serves as a fundamental tool to accomplish this end-goal. For my company, the outcome must always be that we "delivered wow." To help remind every team member of this goal, we have made this the central "catch-phrase" of our mission statement, "Delivering WOW by creating an unparalleled experience at every event."

Though brief, almost every word of the mission statement is important. As DJs, we are literally on our toes during the entire event (we never sit down) because we are busy creating the mix that will set the perfect mood for each moment. Those moments combine for an experience that has no equal and one that the client will talk about for weeks, maybe years, to follow. This is true for every event. The same effort put forth to create an unparalleled experience will be exerted for a wedding reception, birthday party, or a corporate event. The mental state for us is the same for every event: We are going into the event with the outcome in mind of "delivering wow."

If we went into an event with the attitude of "another day, another dollar," the outcome would be a lackluster event, one that the client will soon forget, or worse, remember for being sub par. There is no magic blueprint for a guaranteed "wow" event, but several steps can be followed to help increase the potential of a successful outcome.

PLANNING TO ROCK THE PARTY

Let's take, for example, how to better prepare for a holiday party around the Christmas season. Did you notice the word "prepare" in the last sentence? I've been a college professor for over twenty years and before every lecture I prepare my notes, even if it's the same lecture as last semester. There is no way that I'd walk into the classroom, open the book and try to "wing it" from memory. I'll review the material at hand and update it with any new information. I might also try to approach the material in a different manner, based on questions that had been asked in the previous year. Any DJ event would also require a good amount

HOLIDAY TUNE			ALTERNATIVES
SONG TITLE	STANDARD ARTIST	ALTERNATIVE VERSION	
1 WHITE CHRISTMAS	BING CROSBY	DRIFTERS	
2 BABY, IT'S COLD OUTSIDE	JOHNNY MERCER AND MARGARET WHITING	JOHN TRAVOLTA & OLIVIA NEWTON-JOHN	
3 JINGLE BELLS	BRENDA LEE	DIANA KRALL	
4 MERRY CHRISTMAS BABY	BONNIE RAITT & CHARLES BROWN	ERIC CLAPTON AND SHERYL CROW	
5 HAVE YOURSELF A MERRY LITTLE CHRISTMAS	FRANK SINATRA	PRETENDERS	
6 SLEIGH RIDE	JOHNNY MATHIS	DEBBIE GIBSON	
7 LET IT SNOW, LET IT SNOW, LET IT SNOW	DEAN MARTIN	JACI VELASQUEZ	
8 HAVE A HOLLY JOLLY CHRISTMAS	BURL IVES	HARRY CONNICK JR.	
9 WINTER WONDERLAND	JOHNNY MATHIS	EURHYTHMICS	
10 IT'S THE MOST WONDERFUL TIME OF THE YEAR	ANDY WILLIAMS	HARRY CONNICK JR.	
11 CAROL OF THE BELLS	HARRY SIMEONE	LOS LONELY BOYS	
12 SANTA CLAUS IS COMING TO TOWN	FRANK SINATRA AND CYNDI LAUPER	CARLYLE FRASIER	
13 HERE COMES SANTA CLAUS	ELVIS PRESLEY	RAMSEY LEWIS TRIO	
14 IT'S BEGINNING TO LOOK A LOT LIKE CHRISTMAS	BING CROSBY	KATHERINE MCPHEE	
15 MY FAVORITE THINGS	TONY BENNETT	KELLY CLARKSON	

of preparation. Of course with a wedding reception, at least one meeting with the bride and groom is expected in order to know what elements they want in their event and any special music requested. Holiday parties for corporations deserve the same level of planning. Find out who is in charge of the event. This should be easy, since somebody had to contact you to contract your services. There is a good chance that there is a planning committee, with one person assigned to be the spokesperson for the group. This is a more ideal situation, as it helps you get a better idea of the music expected for the event from a wider spectrum of the employees.

Part of the planning will be to ask the contact person what the order of the festivities will be. Ask questions about the timing of the social hour, dinner, speeches, door prizes, and time for dancing. For example, inquire about the type of music for the social hour. This is typically when the traditional Christmas tunes are played. ***One variation that you might consider is to play the most popular tunes, but by an artist that is not the standard one for that song (see this issue's list).*** The dinner music might consist of Christmas tunes as well, but perhaps instrumental versions of the songs instead. Look for some lively jazz versions of the songs.

Just like driving a car with a stick-shift and knowing when to



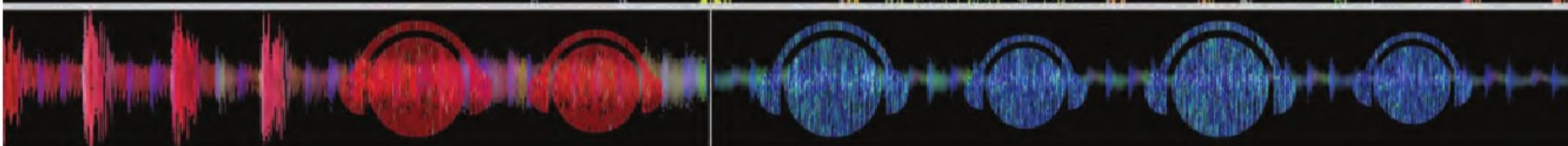
Mobile Beat's resident musicologist since 1992 (issue #11), Jay Maxwell runs the multi-talent entertainment company, Jay Maxwell's Music by Request, LLC, in Charleston, South Carolina. He is also a professor of Business at Charleston Southern University. His passion for detail and continuous research of clients' requests can be found not only in this column, but also in his annually updated music guide, **Play Something We Can Dance To.**

change gears, being aware of when to ramp the music up a notch is equally important. If you know ahead of time what will be occurring after dinner (e.g. a speech from the company president a time of employee recognition) you are better able to adjust the "gears" of the music and know when to start the dance music.

At almost every Christmas party I've DJ'd, someone has approached me with a slightly rude tone of voice, to inform me that they are bored with my music and that they are ready to dance. Knowing that there is an event (door prizes, speech, etc.) coming up in a few minutes will allow you to politely inform the person that the dance music will begin right after the president delivers his or her speech. At the same time, take the guest's request and play it as soon as you can.

Part of a successful outcome in any situation is to ask questions. Knowing the answers will help you perform your job better and "deliver wow." Yet, as at any party, no matter how much planning happens beforehand, a DJ needs to be flexible and ready to change the music to please the crowd. Remember that it starts with great equipment and a wide variety of music, but in the end it's the outcome that is most important. It's about creating an experience that every person will remember for a long time. Your mission as a DJ is about entertaining people. After all, people are the "we" in Play Something WE Can Dance To! **MB**

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MICHIGAN'S INDIAN WEDDING MASTER, NAVEEN SHARMA, BRINGS DJS TOGETHER ONLINE

By Ryan Burger

If you are a DJ and you are on Facebook, Naveen Sharma is a DJ you have probably already met, at least virtually. The Michigan DJ is totally committed to networking and connecting with fellow DJs, and has become a great source of info and advice, and even onsite help, for those involved with events for the Indian community.

Mobile Beat publisher Ryan Burger tracked Naveen down to pick his brain about the Indian specialty market, as well as find out more about his DJ life in general.

Ryan Burger : I'm here with Naveen Sharma. He started out as a specialty DJ in the Indian market, but has since expanded into all kinds of things. Naveen Sharma, tell us a little bit about how you got into DJing.

Naveen Sharma : I started in 1997. Actually a friend of mine had taken me to his college job fair, and a local multi-op DJ company was there and they hired us both. I worked there for about two years, learned the ropes, learned all about music. We did all ethnicities, all types of weddings. It was great. Then, basically, in 1999, I went on my own and just went from there. I've been rolling ever since.

R B : I see you're all over Facebook, with a lot of videos and all kinds of stuff. You're a very giving person with ideas. You like the networking, don't you?

N S : I love the networking—Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, videos, gig logs; we do product reviews, promotions for the Mobile Beat show...yeah. I'm a big social media guy.

R B : Very cool. Tell us a little bit about your specialty area and what's different about Indian weddings, then we'll get into some of the other things you've been doing.

N S : Well, if you've never been to an Indian wedding some of them can be two or three days long! There are multiple events. We specialize in Indian weddings but obviously we do all types of weddings. A lot of the weddings we do, the bride or groom is Indian and the other is not, so it's a mixed wedding, mixed culture with Indian and other ethnicities.

But with regards to the Indian weddings, they're usually multi-day affairs and they keeps us very busy. It's full production—DJ, MC, lighting. There are ceremonies, receptions—I mean, there's so much stuff going on.

R B : So, there's a lot more involved than for the average wedding...we meet with the bride, we plan lots of stuff. But our actual commitment that day of entertainment time is only four to six hours...

N S : Yeah. I'll give you an example. Just two weeks ago we had an event on Friday. It was about an hour drive. It was almost like our version of a rehearsal dinner. It was a pre-event, called the garba. It's a Gujarati event where they dance—it's a stick dance. It's just a welcoming event. That went from about 6:00 to 11:00.

Then we woke up the next day at 6:00 AM. We had to be set up by 8:00 at the hall. Then when we started the wedding



at 9:00 AM, and that went until noon, followed by lunch. We had a few hours' break to flip the room. (We had 500 people so we had to flip the room.) We had to do all the uplighting.

And the reception went from 6:00 PM to midnight. So, by the time we got home it was 2:00 in the morning. It was definitely an 18- to 20-hour day.

RB : Have any of the other DJs that you've networked with brought you into their markets to handle these kinds of events?

NS : I have. You know, we're based in Michigan, but we go all over Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Kentucky, Tennessee, the Midwest. We've worked with some DJs even for destination weddings, like in Cancún;



Photos this page courtesy of Perfect Image Photography.com

American weddings, white, black, Asian, Hispanic, Jewish—all ethnicities.

And with the Platinum Event Group we're able to do everything—DJ, MC, lighting, photo booth, video etc. For Indian weddings, you need everything; pretty much everything in a one-stop shop...

RB : So a good thing to learn from that is that other DJs in your area aren't as much competition and they are partners in the industry, working together...

I know there's a strong networking group, a good number of disc jockeys in the Detroit area, and all you guys network in general. But then you've gone as far as working with Dave in that you actually are doing business together. Fantastic.

NS : Yeah. I mean, there's no reason for people to, for lack of a better word, stab each other in the back or be competition. We should all be friends. And it's the same thing with our local group of Indian DJs here. We're all friendly. We all try to help each other out.

And now I've reached out to a lot of the local wedding planners and local DJs here, some of the ones I've met at Mobile Beat, and I've said, "Hey, this is our new company we started; let's network, let's sit together and see how we can all make the market better for everybody."

RB : What about marketing for your different ventures? Any tips for the other DJs?

NS : Well, for Platinum Event Group we've done a lot with Wedding Wire. We have a spotlight listing. I talked to a number of DJs and they suggested Wedding Wire, as well as some of the local bridal shows.

I've been working with some of the DJs I met at Mobile Beat and some of the speakers who did presentations on bridal shows to help make a good booth for us.

As far as the Indian market, there are a few special-



other international destinations.

I just recently got a call from another local DJ, a friend of mine who also comes to the Mobile Beat show. He called for an Indian wedding. He's not Indian, so he's going to bring me aboard to consult. So yeah, we travel all over.

RB : What can you tell us about the Platinum Event Group? You are working with some other disc jockeys and going after some of the general market, correct?

NS : Yeah. Platinum Event Group is our new company. My friend Dave, who's also known as "Super Dave," we're neighbors. And we thought, hey, let's partner, let's sit down and talk. We roomed together at MBLV, we got to know each other, we formed a really nice bond, good friendship, our families met, and we said let's start a new company.

So we put both our talents together. We have his company, we have my company, then we have the new Platinum Event Group, so everything's kind of in one big group where we can offer everything. We're going after all types of weddings, not just Indian weddings but other weddings as well; regular

ized Indian websites which we advertise on, but the majority is word of mouth, local community advertising, doing local events for the community. We have one coming up, which is a charity event. They're expecting like 500 people and a lot of bigwigs. The mayor's going to be there.

So, doing stuff like that, helping the community out is important. But in the Indian market it's pretty much word of mouth and referrals, because we've been doing it for 17 years. And with the new company we're getting our feet wet, so doing more advertising for that.

RB: I know I experienced a strong business push after a friend of mine who is in the Jewish community out here referred us to start doing bar mitzvahs and stuff, and it was amazing. We tried to advertise in local papers that feature specialty stuff, but it really was just getting out there, doing stuff for that ethnic group, being exposed to it, and treating it as a real marketplace. You obviously have done very well in that area.

Technically, what are the tools of the trade that you like to work with, gear-wise and otherwise?

NS: I'm a big QSC guy and Pioneer guy. I have Pioneer CDJs; I have a Pioneer mixer; QSC speakers and subs. I have multiple DJs that work for me, so some of my guys use Technics 1200s. For a lot of weddings they like that club-style feel.



As far as lighting, I have a lot of American DJ gear, Blizzard, Chauvet and Eternal; kind of a mix of dance lights and moving heads. So definitely all the mainstream brands.

And Indian weddings are so large that you really need a really nice sound system to fill the room, so extra speakers, extra subwoofers are necessary. We've also just gotten into the wireless speaker technology...We did a big event recently, about 800 people, where we were able to put some fill speakers in the back of the room and send the signal wirelessly to save us from running thousands of feet of cable.

So, for the Indian events we definitely use a lot of gear, compared to a traditional Western wedding, which is maybe smaller and more intimate.

RB: Are you using computer software? What are you using with your Pioneers? Are you using the Pioneer as the controller deck or are you playing CDs right through it? How are you working that side of stuff?

NS: Virtual DJ and Serato both. I did start on Virtual DJ and I've just recently started working with Serato. A couple of people have been teaching me that, and giving me some tips and tricks. But I'm definitely a Virtual DJ guy. I know there's always a debate of which software is better, Virtual, Traktor, Serato, etc. But I think it's just a means of providing the music. What's nice about having the CDJs is that you have the versatility, because a lot of the ethnic weddings we do, they'll bring you a CD that night; someone wants to sing or someone wants to do a special dance, so you can put the CD right in the CD player.

I like the feel of the CDJ-2000. I think controllers are great, too. I just like the bigger jog wheel. But yeah, using Virtual and getting into Serato now as well.

RB: What advice do you have for the average disc jockey interested in either getting into a specialty field or just overall for their business?

NS: I mean, I think it's just taking your time, honing your craft. A lot of people do Indian weddings and they've never done it before, and then you hear afterwards how it didn't work well. It's like, don't just chase the money or the dollars.

Really practice what you're doing. Take a lot of seminars. Go to Mobile Beat; take a lot of workshops. There are different DJs out there teaching stuff. Just get some good education and get good information, and then you can raise yourself to the next level.

And I think get good gear as well. I'm a big gear guy, so I think if it's too loud you can always turn it down, but if it's not enough then you're kind of stuck. So I think gear is really important as well.

RB: Any favorite gear suppliers?

NS: I love NLFX. I buy a lot of stuff from Ben Stowe. I go to the local Guitar Center here as well; but mostly it's online through Ben and there are a few other online stores. PSSSL.com is great as well. I do a lot of business with them.

And the other store I use often is Pro Audio Star out of New York. They're really good. I've been using them for a long time. So those are probably my top stores where I get my gear from.

RB: How can readers track you down to networking with you?

NS: My website, www.4NSE.com. Obviously I'm on Facebook; we've probably already connected, but if not, just search "N S." You can find me on YouTube, again, if you type in my name.

And looking forward to meeting you all at Mobile Beat in Las Vegas, and we can definitely have lunch, connect. If you ever have any questions about ethnic questions, Indian weddings, feel free to talk to me. Don't be scared, don't be shy. I'd definitely love to help you out. **MB**

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Chuck "The DJ:" Solo and Still Loving It

FROM YOUTH EVENTS TO WEDDING BIZ, THIS VETERAN STAYS FOREVER YOUNG

By Ryan Burger

Chuck Lehnhard is that rare breed: a DJ who has made a long, ongoing, successful career as a solo operator. Eschewing the common path to multi-operation business expansion, Chuck "The DJ" has spent almost 30 years as a full-time entertainer, after spending more than 15 years developing his craft, prior to that.

A fixture at Mobile Beat's Las Vegas events, Chuck has proven that you can age gracefully in the DJ business, without losing your edge. Mobile Beat publisher Ryan Burger spoke with him about his career and about what helps him stay sharp.

Ryan Burger : I's kind of tough to call him this, but we're here with an "oldie but goodie"—Chuck Lehnhard, aka "Chuck the DJ," of Spectrum Mobile DJ Service in Sebastopol, California, just north of San Francisco. Chuck Lehnhard, tell us how you got started as a DJ.

Chuck Lehnhard : Well, I'll give you the short Reader's Digest version...As most DJs, I really just enjoyed music. My very first event was back in 1969. It was a Boy Scout/Girl Scout dance and they knew that I had access to a stereo, so I brought the stereo in and played music. And that's kind of how the whole thing got started. From then on I just always DJ'd school dances into the '70s and the '80s. I just kept going and went full-time in 1985.

R B : Wow. I started DJing in 1986, so you've got just bit time in the business under your belt! How do you maintain the youthful energy that everybody sees in you.

C L : Well, I was very lucky because when I went full time in '85, I hooked up with an agent buddy of mine that booked primarily bands in schools. So for the first probably 18 years of my business, schools were about 75 percent of my yearly income, and I only did weddings because I kind of had to.

So I think being in the school market really kind of helped keep me young at heart, dealing with the kids and playing their music and absorbing the energy that they have. So I'm very lucky, and I think that it's just kind of kept me going. Even though my career now is more weddings and corporates, I still do school dances—not as many as I'd actually like to, but they really help keep you young.

R B : The energy of all the bouncing 14-year-olds and 16-year-olds jumping around the place feeds you energy; there's no doubt about it...

C L : Exactly. You just can't help but work off that. And when you've got 400 or 800 kids, and they're bouncing around, it's such a feeling. It's a wonderful vibe.

R B : Sebastopol, California—where's that and where else is nearby?

C L : We're about an hour and a half north of the Golden Gate Bridge. The biggest town closest to me would be Santa Rosa, California. We're not far from the Napa Valley. I do a lot of Napa Valley winery weddings, Sonoma Valley winery weddings, that kind of stuff.

I'm 30 minutes from the coastline. Actually it's a really good, centralized area. I can do events down in San Francisco and the Silicon Valley if I want to drive an hour and a half, two hours, not a big deal.

R B : You have no one else working for you, correct? You're a full-time single-op making a complete living off of being a professional DJ.

C L : Yeah, and I always have been. In '85 when I went full-time I was a single-op.

There really wasn't that designation back in the day. Back at the first couple of DJ conventions I went to, their whole pitch was, oh, well, you start out as a single-op but the natural progression is going to a multi-op, which never appealed to me. I was kind of the black sheep of the family. No, dude, I want to make this as a full-time single-system operator.

And I have. This is what I've had. I mean, I've had light guys and that kind of stuff, but I've never gotten into the subbing out events or booking other DJs or any of that kind of stuff. It's always been just me and my "stereo."

R B : There's no replicating Chuck "The DJ"—is that what it really comes down to? Since you can't control the other person completely, you just don't trust someone else working under the Spectrum name?

C L : Well, that's a large part of it. The other thing is I really like having complete control.

When my wife and I first got together and I would take her out as a light guy—or light gal, I guess—and it made it really, really hard because—I mean, I know there are a lot of DJs out there who work with their wives. In my particular case there are certain things I like to do, and it was kind of hard for me to boss my wife around. So that only lasted a few events.

But there are just certain things that

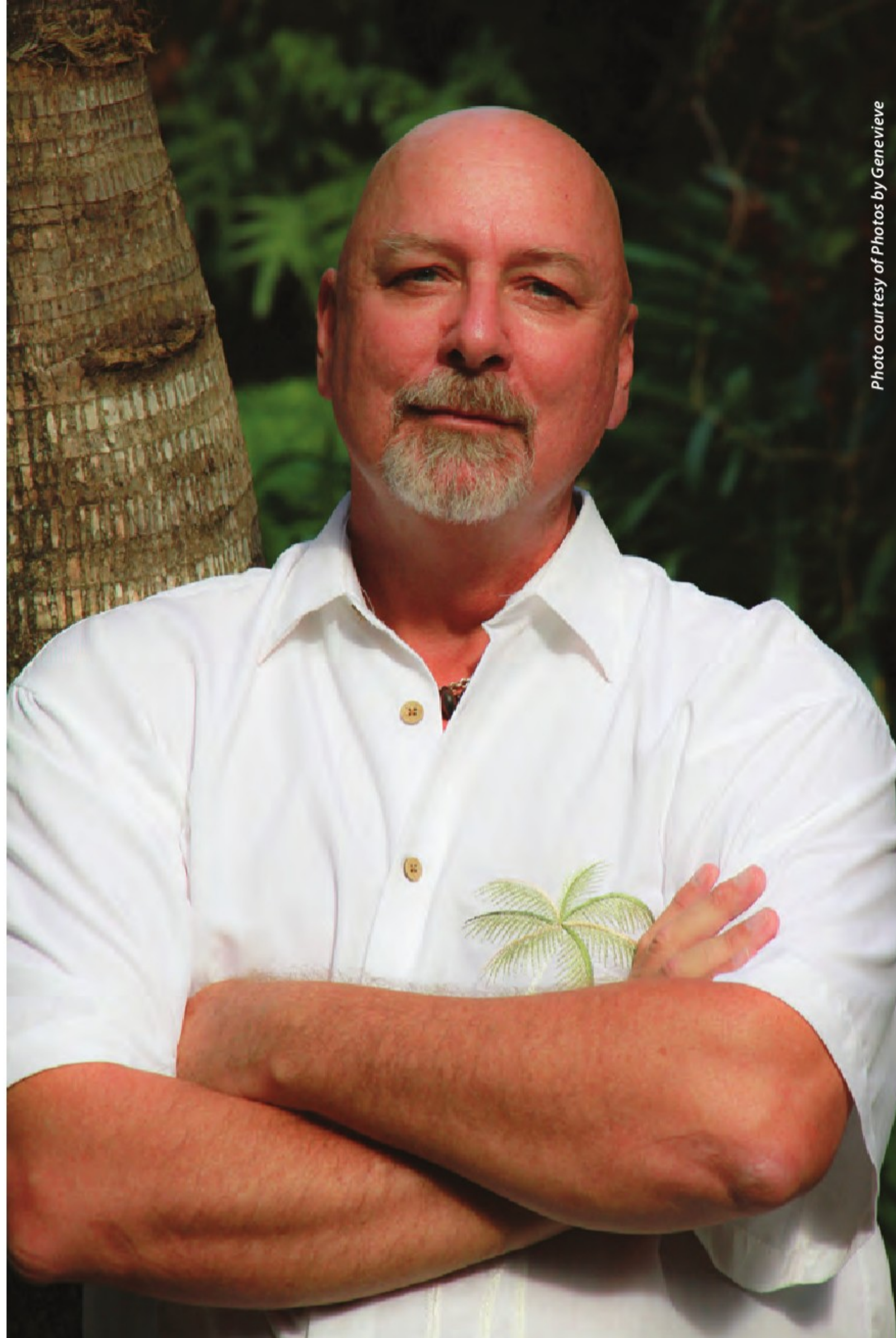


Photo courtesy of Photos by Genevieve

you like to have done and certain ways you want to do it. And when you're at an event and you're the boss, it's like that's the way it goes; that's what you want to do. I like it that way.

R B : Tell us a little bit about your favorite tools of the trade.

C L : Well, I'm a big fan of the E-V line of speakers. I have ZX5s and the newer ZLXs. I have the Live X18 subs. I've got the ZXA1s.

So I'm one of those guys who as far as speakers go have never felt like there was one speaker for every application. Every application is

different, so I've always felt you have to have different speakers for different applications.

R B : What are you using to mix? And your lighting preferences?

C L : I have a Denon mixer. I use Virtual DJ. I don't have a controller. I'm a mouse DJ; I've been very fortunate about that.

When I lived on Maui there was a DJ by the name of DJ Blast who gave me some mixing lessons. Mixing has never been a strong point for me, but he really kind of upped my game with some mixing lessons. I'm still not that I would consider myself a club mixer, but I'm a lot better than I was.

Lighting, pretty much most of the events I'm doing now, probably 75 percent of the weddings that I'm doing don't even have lighting any more, which is kind of sad for me because that's one of the things I've always really enjoyed, bringing in the production, especially the big school dances and stuff like that.

But nowadays, when I do take lighting into a wedding, it's a pretty basic light tree with four Blizzard Pucks on it. I'm still a classic disco mirror ball fan. I'll throw a Mystic or a View3 on there. I like the Blisslights, I have those, and a couple of other basic effects like that.

I do have some uplighting; it's not a strong point. I have about 12 uplights that I can do. I'm not a huge DMX fan, so I pretty do them with static color. "Hey, you want blue? Bam, no problem."

R B : So you don't get too detailed with the uplighting...

C L : I do have a number of buddies in the industry that if that need comes up, I just call them. I've never been one of those guys who says yes to everything. I do have a DJ buddy here locally, we joke about it that he can't say no to an event or no to a question or no to a request. I'm really good at saying no, because if I can't do it or I don't feel comfortable doing it, I won't do it.

If it's going to be done, it's going to be done right, and that to me is really important. I'm just not going to go in and try to do it just for the money. Money's secondary.

R B : That's one thing that some of the newer DJs out there can definitely learn from.

If you had five minutes to talk with a group of 20 DJs that have only been doing this for a year or two, what advice would you have for them?

C L : Well, I like to let people know that they really shouldn't over-extend themselves. Don't say yes to everything. You need the solid basics.

If I'm at an event, it all comes down to the music. If everything else is blowing up, if everything else is going wrong, as long as you can program your songs and make people dance, it really doesn't matter what else

has happened. You could have problems with the minister or the cake or the venue or whatever. You could even have technical problems with your ceremony system or whatever.

But the basic of being a DJ is being a DJ. It's picking the songs, playing the right songs, making people dance.



Basically when it comes right down to it, that's what they all really need to do. They need to cater to their audiences and not their egos, playing whatever they want to play and hoping people dance to it.

They need to learn the basics and be solid before they go on to other things. Too many guys see all these DJs doing the fancy uplighting and the gobos and the big production and the big façades and think, oh, that's what you've got to do.

Well, no. Dude, learn the basics, get a solid foundation, then go there if you want to go there. But don't just jump in with both feet and think you can do everything all at once.

R B : Anything else you want to throw out there?

C L : Well, I don't want to sound like I'm kissing butt here or something, but going to the conventions—anyone that's going to be reading this—chances are they've been to Mobile Beat, the Vegas show.

I had to take a few years off when I moved to Maui because it was a little inconvenient for me financial-wise. But now that I'm back and it's a little bit easier for me to fly there...I still go there, after 28 full-time years. I still learn stuff. And if they can get their butts to the convention, they really need to do that. That's where you're going to get energized and learn things.

I'm lucky. I network a lot with DJs in my area and so we have a pretty good relationship here and we can talk and share ideas and stuff like that. But at a convention you've got a zillion other guys from a zillion different other areas. It's a wonderful experience, and they should all try and get to a convention...



R B : And you're a person who is very approachable. Describe how to find Chuck Lehnard at a DJ conference...

C L : They're going to find a bald-headed guy, probably wearing an aloha shirt.

R B : Yeah, baby.

C L : Yeah. I've always liked aloha shirts and they kind of defined my style for a while. A lot of times, if I'm not in a seminar, I'm in the hallways, talking to people.

I'm just out there and I'm not afraid to butt into conversations, especially if I hear something. And I'm very approachable and I'll tell people—I mean, if they ask me a question about something, if I've got an answer, I'll share anything. I don't care. I don't hold back, even if it's somebody in my own area. The more people that share, the more people that learn and trade ideas, the better it is for everybody.

And I'll probably be wearing board shorts. Or I might be on the golf course. You never know.

R B : That's right, you've organized a golf outing right before the show for a few years. You enjoy your golf. But you don't wear the goofy clothes that golfers wear. You're wearing Hawaiian instead.

C L : Well, there's a company called Loudmouth Golf that I've recently become a fan of. They've actually been around for years and years, and years ago they had these pants with Halloween jack-o-lanterns on them. I actually saw them somewhere (golf magazine or something)—and I actually bought some to wear at my Halloween events. And I still wear them.

My whole life, my attitude, it's got to be fun. It's not always about the money. It doesn't matter if it's DJing or my golf or all that kind of stuff, life in general with my wife, Kajira—it's got to be fun. It's just got to be fun. It's not fun, it's not worth it.

*Find out more about Chuck at ChuckTheDJ.com. **MB***

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DJ Mixes It Up with Guitars

JC FAXAS BRINGS A DJ'S EAR AND EYE TO BIG RETAIL

By Mobile Beat staff

Although Guitar Center is a corporate giant in the music gear world, possibly prone to losing that personal touch that local retailers are known for (despite the best efforts of GC employees), it should be encouraging to all DJs who shop at GC, that the head of the company's pro audio and DJ segment is, himself, actually a DJ.

With a successful decade-plus stint with his Discomania DJ Service behind him, as well as a stab at dance music stardom with a 1990 track, "Girl I Love You" (which is still sought after by collectors), Juan "JC" Faxas stepped onto the audio gear sales path, and has travelled all the way to a top position at a top music gear retailer.

JC Faxas is now a Director/Buyer/Category Manager responsible for the Pro Audio / DJ / Lighting departments of more than 300 Guitar Center stores—and he brings an experienced DJ's perspective to managing this big part of the biggest US chain of music equipment stores. We sat down with him for a quick chat about that perspective, and what he sees coming down the pike for the DJ gear market.

Mobile Beat : JC, tell us a little bit about how you got into the DJ business, as well as the wider realm of MI.

JC Faxas : Okay. Let's see. I was the kid who always got invited to little house parties because I had a little box with 45s. So I'd go around and basically sit by the record player and change the records out.

And then one day my sister was taking some ballet classes and they wanted to have a party to raise some money for a show they were doing. So I had a good home stereo and I had my 45s and a turntable, and I started playing music that way. My dad made an extra pair of speakers for me. And it went really well, so they asked me to do it again.

And then this time I ended up getting a cassette deck along with the turntable, and I found a company that actually made a mixer you could queue on—this was in 1977. So I played that party and they liked it and they asked back again, and this time they paid me.

So that's kind of how I started. It was totally an accident. Those parties, those fundraiser dances just kept getting bigger and bigger. And then I got asked to do weddings and United Way, and it just kind of grew from there; been doing it ever since.

MB : How did you make the next move into the larger music gear industry? Did you work in other places before you hooked up with Guitar Center?

JC F : Yeah, years later. I ran my own mobile DJ and I had three units going at once. And I also had a lot of club gigs. I was doing some parties at the Florentine Gardens here in Hollywood, at the Roosevelt Hotel; a lot of big places.

And then I get a call. It was a restaurant chain and they had like 40 clubs or something like that and they wanted me to work some nights. So I started doing that and was still doing my mobiles on the side. Then the chain decided that I guess they didn't want to pay for the insurance for the clubs or whatever, so they shut all the clubs down.

One of my regulars told me about a gig at Guitar Center. So I'm like, you know, why not? I'll give it a try and see what happens. And I started in the Covina store and did that for about six and a half years and started sneaking some DJ gear into the store, which I wasn't supposed to do, but that was back in the day.

Then I get a call to come up to management as an assistant buyer. I said, yeah, sure. You know, long drive, but I was off the sales floor and I was actually going to be able to affect some



of the buying decisions. We started getting more DJ gear in.

And it's just been growing and growing every year. Live^o sound, DJ, and lighting is what I'm running now. It's pretty cool.

M B : When did you make the move?

JC Faxas : I started at Guitar Center in 1992. So it was a while back. I came to management I think it was '98 or '99.

M B : Where do you see things going for the DJs?

JC F : You know what? I think it's just going to grow and grow.

People tend to say the word "DJ" like it's one guy; there are so many different facets, from the wedding mobile guy to the party mobile guy to the big-name club guys. We're trying to serve all of the above. There's the bedroom DJs too—we kind of want to cover them all.

And they all go in different directions. I mean, right now the trend is software and controllers, with Serato and Native Instruments.

M B : Stuff like Virtual DJ on the video side—

JC F : Virtual DJ, also. Yeah. So we have to make sure that we carry the best controllers and that they have the software that goes with them that everybody wants.

We work hand-in-hand with some of the major manufacturers, and being a DJ, I kind of know what DJs want. So we work with them to add features. We worked with Pioneer on the FX and FZ specifically for the U.S. market, but they're also doing really well in Europe. We kept hearing that nobody wants big controllers; Europe only wants little controllers. So we went to Pioneer and said, hey, we need a big controller; we need you to do this. And that's how the MZ came along.

M B : So, do you still go out and do gigs very often? How stay connected with the DJ performance side?

JC F : You know, I still go out every couple of months and do something. A friend might have a wedding or their daughter's getting married so they'll call me in for that.

I also do corporate gigs once in a while. So I still keep my hand in it just to stay fresh, and because, honestly, if I don't do it for a couple of months I start jonesing for it; I need to work a room.

M B : Can you share any secrets about the kind of gear you personally use? Are you rockin' the turntables? Are you a controller guy? What are you using?

JC F : It depends on the party. And if I'm just having some friends over at home, it'll probably be the turntables. I still have a bunch of my OG records.

If it's a house party where I know I'm going to be using a lot of effects and stuff, I might bring out an S-4. If it's more of a wedding and it's typical mixing and blending and stuff, I might bring out an FX. So it depends.

I don't have an SZ yet. They're doing really well and I can't get my hands on one yet.

M B : Any advice for the readers on the business overall, or specifically about shopping for gear?

JC F : Do your homework. I think the Internet has really opened things up for people.

Back in the day, when I started, I had to rely on friends and I'd go to clubs and kind of see what they were using, and sometimes you bought the wrong thing. Now, with the Web, you can look up anything and get opinions from everybody, so you kind of have to sort through those a little bit.

I don't know. I think you can't go wrong with a good computer and a controller. And depending on the kind of parties you're doing, you've got to remember—you've got to play for the crowd, not for yourself. And you've got to have the music to go along with it.

There's nothing more important than keeping the room happy. You know, I don't think I ever advertised; it was all word of mouth. And when I was really doing this I was booked rock-solid all the time.

M B : So it's all about being responsive to your customer, which is obviously what you're doing in your "day job" now, along with the continuing DJ gigs...

Any final thoughts?

JC F : You know what? Just keep your art alive, whether you're a turntablist or you're a controller guy or you're a performance artist.

Just do it for the love of the gig. I always told myself I would stop when it quit being fun. I never said, well, when I hit 25 or when I hit 35 or whatever. It was always, you know what, I'm going to stop when it's no longer fun.

It's still fun—you know? And for the older guys who have kids, show them how to DJ. It's a lot of fun. It's probably one of the best gigs I've ever had. **MB**



Get Ready to Singo

A MOBILE MUSICAL BINGO SYSTEM

By Ryan Burger

It was Thursday night in Grimes, Iowa and I popped into the local bar with just a 1U mixer, a microphone and an Android tablet, ready to try something totally new. While I've never been into the bar scene, as a non-drinker who is busy with family and business all the time, I thought this opportunity was fantastic. After receiving a Singo Tablet on review two weeks before, I talked with the owner of the bar and made arrangements to test it out in a live environment.

Singo has been developed over the last few years by a company out of Tennessee, which has recently been awarded a patent for the musical bingo product I had in my hands. This is an all-in-one product that includes the software, the music, the system and the games.

It initially comes with 25 games (and all the music that goes with them) that are set for play immediately, and more are in development at this time. The idea of the game is everyone playing gets a bingo card with song titles listed on it. When the game starts, you listen for songs and enjoy them, often singing out loud to them as they are songs that you will know, and when one that is on your card is played, you mark it. Anywhere from 30-45 seconds of the song is played, and it always has the most popular part of the song (the hook) right in the clip.

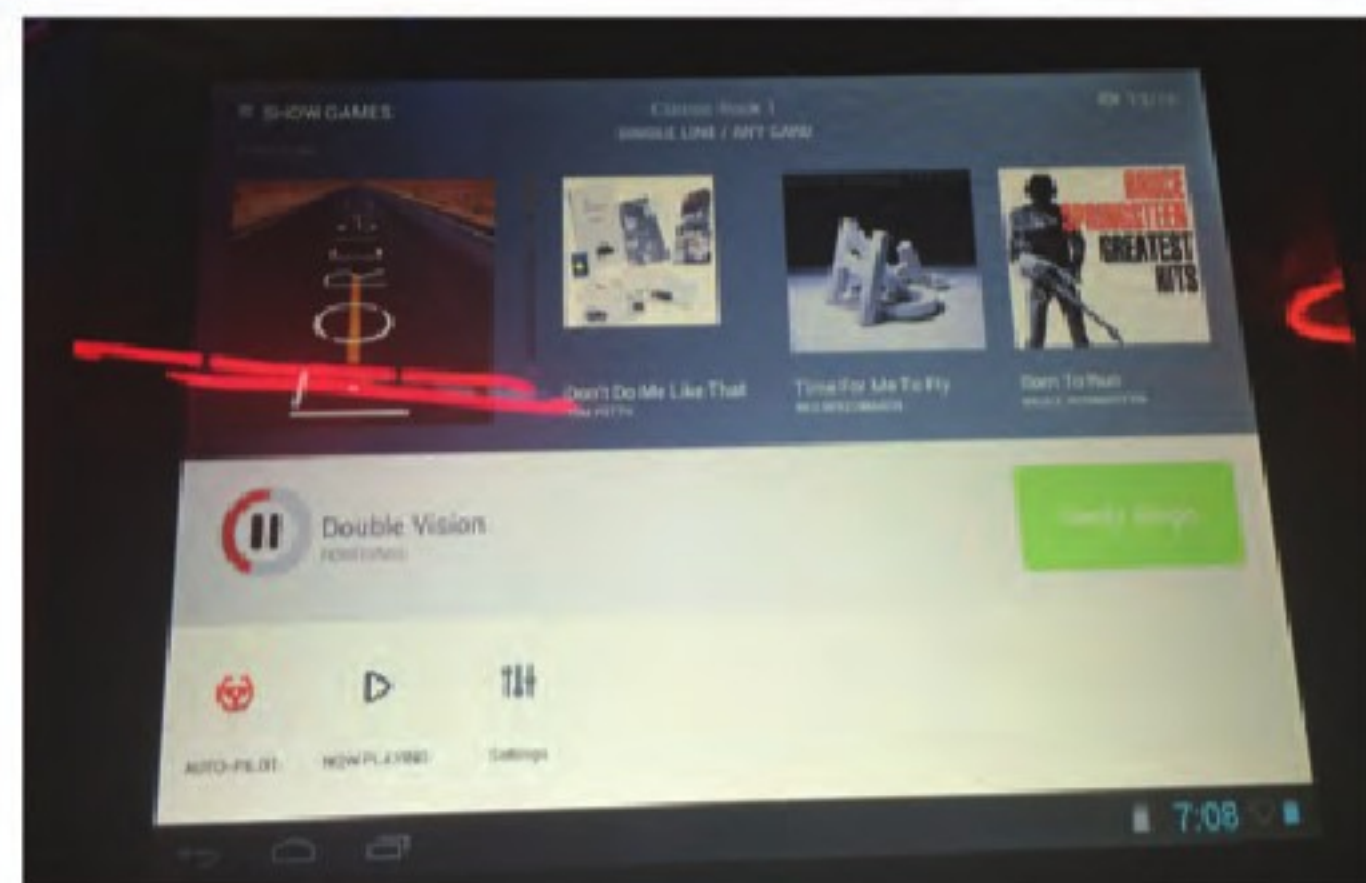
For my debut game I chose Classic Rock, Set #1. After about 15 minutes of having my dozen players enjoying the music and playing the game, the first Singo was called. I took the card and checked it against the songs played by using the QR code on the card and the camera built into the tablet. After telling people not to clear their cards, and the winner was announced for the first part of this Singo game. The next winner was someone who had two Singos on the same card, which happened about 20 minutes later. The final round of total blackout wraps things up about 15 minutes after that.

Total time on the game including setup and everything else was around 50-55 minutes, a nice sweet spot for a bar, often because people need to take a smoke break or head out for the evening. We then moved into a second game and just played to the single Singo portion. Total time around 75-80 minutes.

The key to this is having fun with everyone, making it a social occasion. I did this by doing a little fun trivia with people, talking about the songs, and making my rounds checking on what was going on in the game and other things (sort of like how a bartender has a lot of social time with the patrons. I probably talked a little too much, but having something to say every second or third song, even if it's just telling them the name of the track if it's a tougher one, makes it fun.

Using the Singo system to make money during the week, as compared with your normal weekend events will cost you \$200 upfront for the hardware (preparation fee) and then \$200/month for the updates. These are being marketed to both venues and to DJs that can take them to various venues during the month. At an estimated gig rate of \$150-\$200, the first monthly gig pays most of your cost of the software. **MB**

www.playsingo.com



Put Your Game Show "On the Spot"

AN INNOVATIVE NEW SYSTEM FROM GAME SHOW MANIA

By Marc Andrews

Fifteen-plus years ago, my company got into game shows with the help of the original Creative Imagineering folks and their Game Show Mania systems. They were the first to show us that there was more money to be made as a DJ company offering game shows, rather than only doing weddings, school dance, etc.

Although the brand had faded away for a while, as other game show providers entered the arena, but now Game Show Mania is back, and generating a lot of new excitement.

Game Show Mania units are used all around the world on cruise ships, at amusement parks, and by independent mobile entertainers like us. As the owner of several of their past hardware units, I was excited when first I saw the "beta" version of what they call "On the Spot" at Mobile Beat Las Vegas last February. I asked them to put me on the list to get a unit as soon as they became available.

If you have seen the "Face-Off" unit



released by Game Show Mania about five years ago, you are familiar with the overall look of the hardware. But On the Spot goes beyond the Face-Off paradigm. It adds lighting, a countdown timer, a new sound circuit and the unique On the Spot functionality. It allows the player to buzz in on their competitor if they feel that they have no idea what the answer is. The countdown timer also adds pressure and fun to the game by making it so both contestants lose if no one answers. Other improvements include microphone lockouts so they can't yell into the mic and chainability of the systems if you want to add more player stations.

All of this is controlled by a wireless remote control or wired controller. The unit needs normal power, and has one XLR output that you can patch into your DJ rig or powered speaker for mixing in music clues and your MC microphone. So, literally with a wireless microphone, an MP3 player for music along and the powered speaker (with the

built-in mixer that most now have), you have a portable game show that will cover 150-200 people for a fun-filled night!

ON THE SPOT IN ACTION

For our review we took this unit out to a local high school for their beginning-of-the-year staff event where they were quizzed on safety procedures at the school. In only about two minutes, I was able to show the teacher who served as the MC how to control the system. I watched her mic volume but was able to hand off running the game easily. We played two games, one of them being a straight trivia game, and the other being a Family Feud-style game where we used the unit for the first part of each round.

In short, for an investment in a physical game show system that goes well beyond simple hand buzzers and scoreboards, the On the Spot system would be a powerful addition to the services any DJ provides. Definitely take a look, if you are in the market for a game show system.

www.gameshowmania.com



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Stop in , or better yet, tell a friend who has not yet experienced Mobile Beat to stop in at your nearest participating DJ gear dealer, to receive a complimentary copy of MB with a product purchase.

Rebuilding from the Ground Up

THE REINVENTION OF A DJ BUSINESS

By Stu Chisholm



Join Stu online, at MobileBeat.com as he chronicles his complete company re-vamp in his blog, "From the Ground Up."

My DJ business got started in the wake of the Carter Administration and the recession of the late '70s. It was done on a shoestring: I already had a music collection that was the envy of my friends, along with a stereo system that was purchased to specs based on the community hall at my apartment complex. In 1979, DJs were the oddballs, since most events used live bands.

Little by little I grew my business, upgrading as my bookings and budget increased. My stereo became a power amp; playback went from belt drive turntables to direct drive and eventually to CD; my mixer from Radio Shack to Numark, and finally to Rane. Then came MP3s and massive weight reduction. Yes, for more than 30 years, my service was on a continual growth track, setting higher and higher records in events performed and income.

HEY, LIFE, LOOK AT ME...

So then it happened. A lot has been said on these pages about the last recession. A lot has been blamed on it, some rightly and some not. What is undeniable is that it forced DJ services to reinvent themselves or perish. Where I live in suburban Detroit, a whole lot of DJs did the latter. Before the book itself became obsolete, the 2½ pages of DJ listings in the Yellow Pages fell to 2½ columns. While interviewing some of my local colleagues for an article for this magazine, I was struck by how many of my fellow full-time DJs now had day jobs, and those were all in different fields! That situation was my main motivation to write my book, *The Complete Disc Jockey*. Not only did I want to show that there are other DJ jobs beyond weddings, but that a struggling mobile business could find other ways to generate income besides their performances—so that maybe they didn't need that other job.

I was stunned by how many DJs took these ideas to heart in the weeks, months and years that followed, adding things like upright-

ing, custom gobos and photo booths to their arsenals. A hard-hit company could at least maintain their bottom line, whereas DJs in places less rudely impacted by the recession could set new records for sales. (These ideas were popular among Canadian DJs.)

Whatever its cause and real impact on my business, a "perfect storm" took place when the recession collided with my own efforts to reduce my workload. This was due to my own short-sightedness; I never fully realized just how big the impact of the recession would be (and maybe more importantly, how long it would last). The other part was that DJs in my area almost universally lowered their rates and never sent me the memo. When I at last got word that even the larger multi-op services were offering bargain DJs and even iPod-ready rental systems, I knew that my old rate structure and business plan would not be sustainable. After a long, hard battle, implementing some hard cost cutting measures and following a whole lot of advice from the "gurus" of the DJ world, I was forced to lower my rates for the first time ever.

LESS IS NOT MORE—IT'S LESS!

With a reduced workload comes a reduced referral base. Obviously, if fewer people are seeing you work every week, you're going to get fewer calls! This meant that I'd have to spend far more time and money on marketing and advertising than I have done previously. I'd also have to pay attention to things that I'd previously let "go to seed" or ignored altogether since they hadn't been the primary ways of directing clientele towards my business.

So, first things first. I had to identify my main strengths and weaknesses and plan accordingly—a tactical, global business makeover. Thus this new column.

This feature will be an ongoing overview of my efforts, with the hope that you might also find some ideas that will be of benefit.

Three main things demand my attention:

1. Marketing!
2. Transportation
3. Equipment upgrades

Let's take these in reverse order. Ever since my change-over to MP3, featured in detail in the March 2007 Mobile Beat (#106), I've been using the Cortex HDC-1000, a dedicated MP3 playback system. I've worn a few out a few, but over the years replacing them has gotten less expensive. Sadly, in that brief seven-year span, the company has stopped supporting these units



*Stu Chisholm had been collecting music since he was about age 8 and began his DJ career in 1979. After a stint at the Specs Howard School of Broadcast Arts, he studied the DJ arts with famous Michigan broadcaster Bill Henning, interned at Detroit's rock powerhouse, WRIF, and later added voiceover work and club gigs at Detroit's best venues. He has shared his extensive DJ experience through MB columns, as a seminar speaker and through his book, *The Complete Disc Jockey: A Comprehensive Manual for the Professional DJ*.*

(that were sold with the promise that “because of our constant updates, they’ll never become obsolete”) and the remaining units have some quirks that have never been addressed and will not be, given they’re no longer being manufactured. It’s time to upgrade to something new.

GEAR UP!

As I said back in ‘06, I’m loathe to adopt a computer as my playback system. We all know how, when our computers are working right, as the old song goes, life can be a dream. But when things go wrong, they go wrong without notice and consequences are dire. Back in the ‘90s I saw an entire rock concert ended and patrons sent home and their money refunded, due to the band’s computer crashing. We do not get a “mulligan” when doing once-in-a-lifetime events such as weddings. Regardless, just as the market forced the demise of the superior Betamax format in favor of VHS during the VCR wars of the ‘80s, the DJ equipment market has, for the most part, kicked the powerful media player/controller aside in favor of laptop/computer-based playback. Reluctantly, I’m forced to consider this option.

I do have a few requirements. First, I demand SMALL. Gone are the days of the “DJ coffin,” and my current console is a heavy cube-style affair that is tough to move around by myself and impossible to carry over any distance. I’d like a console that I can carry like an attaché case; something a bit more cutting-edge.

Secondly, any screens will need to be rugged and viewable in direct sunlight. This is a tall order, leaving most conventional laptops out of the running. Lastly, they will need to operate over a ridiculous temperature range. My Cortex tends to periodically freeze up when the mercury climbs above 90 degrees. I’m often called to do outdoor events in tents, and I’ve even performed from the back of my cube truck, which is basically a glorified moving van. It gets extremely hot, due partly to the “skylight” feature of the fiberglass roof, allowing for decent light when moving around in it.

So as I build my new playback systems, I’ll be focused on these parameters above all else.

MOVE OUT!

The main delivery system for my DJ service for the past 18 years has been my Ford E-350 commercial cube truck, once featured in Mobile Beat (#41), November 1997. Needless to say, a hard re-evaluation is in order. Although the age of the van might favor outright replacement, it has been used exclusively for DJ work over the life of the vehicle, accumulating less than 80,000 miles overall. It’s also paid for. Overall it is also in good shape, but has some things that clearly need attention, the most obvious being the rear roll-up door. Made of wood, it has become brittle over the years, requiring frequent repair. It needs replacement. Options run from a low of \$700 to a high of \$2,000. Hoping for a long service life, I’m loathe to go with another wooden door.

Secondly, the body is fiberglass and badly needs to be gel-coated. This requires removing all graphics, a hard power wash, actual fiberglass repair of pits and “spider-webbed” spots and then re-glazing, which any boat owner well knows. Unlike a boat, it has always been in direct sunlight, enduring everything that Michigan weather can throw at it. To bring the body back up to snuff, it will need much TLC, not to mention completely new graphics. Lastly there are some minor mechanical details to attend to, such as a rusted out oil pan, a little brake work and an upgrade in the “cockpit” to some decent captain’s chairs. I plan to top it all off with a rear-view camera like those popular with RV owners.

DJ, PROMOTE THYSELF!

The most urgent need is to bring in more work. Rather than simply “plugging the holes” in my marketing scheme, I plan on scrapping it altogether and starting from scratch. One of the things I let “go to seed” has been my website. Getting 75+ jobs solely by referral for well over two decades relegated my website to a glorified online business card. It had one single “facelift” back in the late ‘90s and, as many colleagues well know, looks ancient by today’s standards. Having lost the wind in my referral sales, my online marketing will need a major overhaul—cyber triage!

Finally having a budget to throw at this aspect gives me a few options that I didn’t have before. My goal is to completely replace my current website, equipping it with the latest features and search engine optimization, and finally incorporating DJ Intelligence, which I’ve also ignored given that my website has had a search engine and database since it went live in 1994. I will also be pumping-up other online marketing, offline marketing, networking and allied vendor outreach based largely on some of the best expert advice in the world: from the contributors to Mobile Beat!

Yes, some attention will also be given to my performance, music, appearance and “showbiz” factors, but these have always major priorities and are in much less need of extra attention. But hey, why not be comprehensive? So I’ll be looking at those too.

I hope you’ll join me on this journey, both via my articles and the blog, the details of which I’ll present in the next installment. And whether you’re doing some minor upgrades or a total overhaul, I’d love to hear your stories, advice, comments and constructive criticisms as well! Feel free to e-mail them to me at: DJStuCrew@gmail.com with the subject, “DJ Makeover.” Until next time, safe spinnin’! **MB**

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following Pro Audio experts provide the rescue:

Music: Coming from a radio background, I had zero experience playing to a live audience, so I asked Jerry Beck of Beck's Entertainment and president of the San Diego DJ Association how he reads crowds. He says he follows three basic principles of music/song construction:

1. The RHYTHM affects the will
2. The HARMONY affects the emotion
3. The LYRICS affect the mind

"If you understand how you want people to feel at any given point during an event, then you will know what type of music to play, if you follow these three principals. This strategy can be used successfully for any type of event."

Microphone: Without a professional mic, the MC simply can't communicate! Steve Olsher (StevO) of Apex Music in San Diego recommended, without hesitation, the Sennheiser XWS series of UHF handheld wireless systems (with an E835 cartridge and 960 UHF tunable frequencies and up to ten hours of use on two AA batteries). The mic can be set for multiple channel changes and has a remote channel sync function to lock in a channel if needed.

DJ Playback: American Audio in Los Angeles has so many great DJ systems to choose from, but in my opinion, their Encore 2000 DJ mixer/controller practically plays itself. This all-in-one product is perfect for a new DJ making the switch from CDs to digital (MP3-based) performance, and features a dual CD/MP3 player and 2-channel audio mixer. It's also a MIDI controller bundled with Virtual DJ LE software, featuring 2 USB inputs. This is a unit that just about any DJ can use, out of the box.

Speakers: Some of the most popular speakers today come from QSC. Phil Sanchez, QSC Senior Communications and Media Relations Manager, recommends the K10 active speaker. "A great setup for DJs purchasing their first system is a pair of QSC K10 Active Loudspeakers with incredibly efficient 1,000W Class D power amplifiers. They're loud enough for almost any setting yet draw so little A/C that they can be run on a single 15-amp circuit...the K10's 90-degree coverage pattern is perfect for a wide variety of applications and venues. Add a KSub to the system for extended low end, and that is sure to keep any party thumping..."

Cables: Running speaker cables hundreds of yards would be ridiculous today, with the reliable wireless systems available. Alto Professional is in the forefront of this technology and offers its Stealth Wireless system, with one dual-channel transmitter and two single-channel receivers that can be set to mono or stereo, two XLR outputs and balanced TRS 1/4" combo inputs, 16 preset UHF channels, internal squelch, mute circuits, trim controls and signal clip indicator lights. One set up is good for 200 feet but coverage can be increased with an expander kit including two additional receivers.

Speaker Stands: Finally, you need speaker stands to round out this killer set-up. I recommend (shameless plug) the original air-powered Frankenstand Generation Four F1 stands for speakers weighing between 35 and 50 pounds (the F2 works with speakers between 55 and 80 pounds). Check them out at www.frankenstand.com. Throw in a Frankenstand two-chambered speaker stand bag and you have a professional DJ system that any newbie would be proud to own. Fade to black. **MB**

“Rescue” reality TV shows (*Bar Rescue*, *Restaurant Impossible* etc.) are very popular right now. The hosts observe a failing business, critiques it, retrains staff, remodels with brand new equipment, and then does a dramatic re-opening with great fanfare.

I decided to “borrow” *Big Bang Theory*’s time machine and do a “DJ rescue” on myself nine years ago, when I was a sound man for local DMC Team Building company, which were all the rage back then before the Great Recession and corporate bail-outs.

One particular sports-themed event would have made a great “stress test.” It was a day-long series of games held at Newport Dunes, a California coastal resort located a few miles from the charming beach towns of Balboa Island and Newport Beach. The resort featured beach-front facilities around a large lagoon where the event was held. My first challenge was to set up football-field-long runs of XLR cable on the tops of several picnic shade structures, daisy-chaining the company’s four well-worn PA speakers along the beach where various games would be held.

The company used a single-channel UHF wireless mic, which was often useless, depending on local interference. Because of the distance of from one end of the beach to the other, I had to gaffer tape the mic’s plastic receiver high on top of the official’s blue pop-up tent to receive a bird’s-eye-view signal from far away.

The company did have a CD player...but it was a home stereo type with a circular rotating tray for three CDs, which would often spin off and get stuck in the back of the machine. One bright spot was their multi-channel plastic mixer that was super light and bulletproof; but it still wouldn’t be up to today’s standards.

Along with all these technical shortcomings, I was also lacking a bit in the basic performance skills needed for mobile events.

THE BIG REVEAL?

Fast-forward to the present: “Rescue” shows always end with a dramatic re-opening of the business. The hosts do a countdown and everyone turns around and oohs and aahs over their new digs. Or, in this case I (the DJ), would turn around and see my brand new DJ equipment! The



Mike Ryan started out writing for news radio, and has been a DJ in the SoCal radio market on KGB and KSDS. He mobiles as Mike on the Mike. He is also the inventor/owner of Frankenstand Powered Speaker Stands.

The Spright Move for Holiday Magic

BlissLights is the creator of innovative lighting solutions that can set the stage for a truly unique experience both indoors and out. Whether it's the

hanging of the strands along the eaves or the dressing of the tree with tiny twinkles, the lights of the holidays are what bring the season to life.

This year, you can harness the beauty and awe of iconic holiday lights without breaking out a ladder by using **BlissLights' Spright and Spright Move**.

The Spright is a commercial-grade yet user-friendly spotlight that emits a cozy sky of delicate pinpoints of light. At first glance, the effect looks like traditional holiday rope lights, but they actually float freely across building exteriors, plant foliage, and more,

to create a display viewers will think took hours to design and hang. In reality it's as easy as picking a spot to stake the light, plugging it in to any standard outlet, and then standing back and enjoying the show.

The Spright Move is the only device needed to create breathtaking holiday displays in just a few minutes. Instead of simply projecting a static light, it has been designed to shine thousands of moving pinpoints that will dance and sway across any surface from walls and palm trees to glassy pools and driveways. Best of all, they are easy to set up and energy efficient—two features that are mandatory for creating a stress-free event that will be talked about for years to come.

Since its founding in 2006, BlissLights has been setting a new standard in the lighting industry. What started with a simple field of stars meant to sooth the



inventor's daughter into sleep, has grown into a diverse product line utilizing their own patented holographic optics and light projection technology. With over 20 years of experience in laser development, they hope to introduce the world to the fun, beauty, and healing nature of light, even within their own homes.

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Cross Over to the Pro Side

ROCKIN' THE 3RD INCARNATION OF CROSS SOFTWARE FROM MIXVIBES

By Michael Buonaccorso, Jr.

DJs looking for some powerful audio and video mixing features, as well as some innovative wireless/cloud options in a mature DJ software program, the latest version of Cross, by Mixvibes is well worth a look.

Earlier this year, Mixvibes released the latest version of their flagship software (Cross 3), and it is offered in three different versions.

Cross DJ Free offers support for two decks and a mixer, plus video mixing. Upgrading to Cross DJ (\$49) adds rekordbox sync, MIDI control, key detection, and a few more advanced features. The full version of software, simply called Cross (\$99), adds full video control, including output, plus HID CDJ control and digital vinyl emulation. This review covers the full version of Cross, but you may want to consider trying

that you can just plug yours right into your computer, fire up the software, and immediately start mixing. Of course I do recommend that you check compatibility prior to purchase. Attempting to MIDI map an unsupported controller with the included MIDI mapping editor is not impossible, but it is definitely not plug and play, at least in my experience. I tried mapping an unsupported controller, and subsequently abandoned efforts after a few frustrated hours of trying to get the jog wheels to respond properly.

What if you use Pioneer CDJs? Well, you're in luck, as Cross offers full CDJ HID support, including syncing with rekordbox™. That means that you can browse, control, and manipulate your mix directly on the CDJ screen, in addition to your laptop.

SUPPORT FOR DVS

Cross also offers support for vinyl and CD timecode control. Like similar programs, Cross has absolute and relative modes that can be set based on your preference for scratching and mixing. External soundcards are supported as well, including Rane boxes, which means that existing Serato users can jump right on board without buying any additional hardware.

Cross uses its own proprietary control records that must be purchased from the Mixvibes website, so don't expect control records that you own from other programs to work with the software. The price is fairly reasonable though; you can get a full version of Cross with two control record for just \$99.

SWITCHING PROGRAMS

If you've been DJing with a laptop for a while, you've probably only used one program for several years. You're hesitant to switch programs because, let's face it, you're familiar with what you know, plus you've built up years of playlists that you would lose when switching to new software. This is not a problem with Cross, as the software offers support for importing Traktor™ and Virtual DJ™ libraries.

In testing, I tried importing my existing Virtual DJ library into Cross. The

database and playlists I created within Virtual DJ imported rather quickly. One thing that was trickier, however, was importing my history from Virtual DJ. Virtual DJ groups history together by date played. So in my case, there are several hundred history groupings from the past several years. Unfortunately, there seems to be no way to batch import these files into Cross, leaving me to import each date individually. This can take a while, but it only needs to be done once.

THE SYNC BUTTON



Songs highlighted in orange are harmonically compatible with the song currently playing.

Ah, the dreaded sync button. Some DJs love it while others despise it. But the fact is, most DJ software programs these days come with a sync functionality, and Cross is no exception. What puts Cross in a different league, however, is the ability for key detection and control. Cross automatically highlights harmonically compatible tracks in orange, so your mixes are always in key. There's also a key match button, so if your next song is out of key, you can change the key to be compatible with the mix. But just remember to listen to the key-changed song before playing it for the crowd, as Cross can't change the laws of basic music theory.

VIDEO MIXING

One area that the developers of Cross clearly put a lot of time into is its video



Selecting your controller in the preferences

the free version to get comfortable with the program before making a financial commitment.

COMPATIBILITY

The nice thing about Cross is that it most likely already works with your existing controller. With pre-mapped MIDI support for over 80 controllers, odds are



Cross by Mixvibes

System Requirements

- Windows 7 or 8
- Mac OS X 10.6 / 10.7 / 10.8 / 10.9
- Intel Core 2 Duo at 2.1 GHz or equivalent
- 2 GB RAM
- Screen resolution 1280 x 720 pixels or higher

mixing capability. If you are a video DJ, you will love the control features and functions Cross offers. For example, you can load the audio and video tracks separately, manipulate the BPM of the video to match the audio, and save your custom creations all within the software. The full version of Cross supports full HD external output right from your laptop. It includes 35 video transitions, as well as 18 video effects. The software also includes integration support for built-in or external webcams, so you can have a “DJ cam” or “party cam” if desired. And video content can even be edited in Cross without the need for another software program.

RECORDING

Like most DJ software programs, Cross



Captions can be added to video in real time

has the ability to record and export audio. But what makes Cross stand out is that you can export directly to Mixcloud or Soundcloud. The software automatically fills in the information about what tracks were played in your mix right on the website. Cross also has the ability to record video and export directly to Youtube or DailyMotion channel. The

video will automatically display what track is playing, and even album artwork associated with the track.

COMPUTER

The minimum system requirements are modest, but if you’re planning on mixing video, I would recommend a decent video graphics card and a ton of ram. Processing power required for some of the more advanced video mixing features of Cross is no joke. Still, on my three-year-old MacBook Pro, the program seemed to hold its own, with smooth transitions and no stuttering.

REMOTE CONTROL

Mixvibes offers remote software to remotely control any version of Cross via a WiFi network. An internet connection is not required, as Cross DJ Remote will create a network between your iOS device and your computer. With the remote app, you can control effects, automatic loops, pitch bend, and more. You can even control the jog wheels for scratching. This software comes in handy when you need to make an announcement away from your DJ booth and then start a song (like the cake cutting at a wedding where the cake is located in a different room). The software is available for any iOS device. Unfortunately, there is currently no Android version available.

PROS:

- Software is reasonably priced and cheaper than most of the competition
- Effortless key

mixing built in

- Tons of video effects and features
- Ability to record audio and video and export to the web with track information automatically displayed
- iOS app offer remote control

CONS:

- Not compatible with every MIDI controller (Some recently released controllers are not supported, even when their older counterparts are.)
- MIDI mapping can be tough if your controller is not supported
- DVS requires vinyl purchased from Mixvibes
- No remote app for Android

CONCLUSION

The newly added features in the latest version of Cross really bump it up to a legitimately competitive piece of software in the DJ software wars. I would definitely now rank it with the likes of Serato and Virtual DJ. And because of the compatibility with so many different controllers, the ability to easily import playlists from other software, and its advanced video mixing features, it’s easy to switch over from another program to Cross. Download the free version and check it out for yourself. I think you’ll be impressed. **MB**



Michael Buonaccorso, Jr. grew up immersed in a DJ environment as son of pro DJ and Mobile Beat cofounder, Mike B., Sr. With an inborn curiosity about how things work, he went from repairs on old radios to lawn mowers to automobiles to sound equipment. Not surprisingly, today he holds a bachelors degree in mechanical engineering and runs his own entertainment company. He has attended every Mobile Beat Show since 1997.

Grab a GoDJ

MONSTER'S TINY CONTROLLER

By Aaron Burger and Ryan Burger

Monster has gone DJ with the GoDJ. Developed in Korea and brought into the Monster mix of products in the last year, this DJ system is absolutely the most compact DJ controller and audio player I have seen with hardware volume controls and cross fader.

Dual 320 x 240 pixel touch screens—one for each side of the mix—allow you to load up tracks, manipulate them with effects and do much more. Music is stored either in the 4GB internal storage (2GB for music storage, 1 GB for recordings, and 1 GB for the manual and extra misc data) or via SD card storage that can support up to 32GB.

The GoDJ plays back 24-bit/96khz sound and can work under a high resolution mode as well, for playback and recording. The build quality is very solid and made to take a beating. It comes with a basic bag for carrying it around. It has a



12-hour battery life so you can now take the party wherever you want.

For the DJ who just wants to mess around while chilling out, this hardware is packed full of features including a full effects unit, touch sampler, sequencer, a detailed EQ and even a recorder so when you are messing with your mix, you can save it. Having something like this on you vs. an iPod makes it so you can have fun with your music while listening to it.

For the professional mobile DJs, this unit is very easy to handle and transport,

and makes a great backup unit to your primary DJ system or for quick gigs on the fly. Plus because of how easy it is to learn, loading a nice backup library into it, and spending 10 minutes with it, will allow you to call on it in an emergency quickly. GoDJ has nicely simplified the DJ interface by combining a media player and a mixer into one extremely portable device. **MB**

www.monsterproducts.com/godj

Spotify for DJs

By Marc Andrews

As a DJ for the last 20+ years, I've seen the technology for playing music go from turntables/cassette deck/single CD player (my first DJ rig), to dual CD players, to (currently) buying MP3s one by one—like most DJs these days.

Music pool services from DJ-only suppliers like Promo Only, TM Studios and RPM, have offered "all you can eat" download options for the last few years, and I subscribe to one of them (and love it).

Yet at my most recent wedding reception I was well prepared for music; but not as prepared as I thought, it turned out, as the couple ended up asking for a lot of music on the spot, which I didn't have. While they were paying me well for every song I played, I didn't feel like buying 20 tracks. Luckily, I had my iPad with me with dJAY 2.5 from Algoriddim installed and my Spotify account set up. I booted it up and started searching.

But let's rewind for a second; for those who don't know, Spotify is a online service that allows streaming of just about whatever music you want, commercial-free, anywhere you have an internet connection. You can pick the music you want, and play whatever you want from their library. This library is constantly changing, as I have experienced when using it before, but overall it's a great place to look for

tracks when your main DJ library doesn't include everything you end up needing at an event. To use the Spotify access in dJAY requires a Spotify Premium account which will cost \$10/month.

When DJing, I carry around 30,000 songs that have been purchased either via disc, from iTunes or similar services, or through my download service mentioned earlier. But sometimes an unexpected request comes up that isn't even available through iTunes; or as I experienced at this wedding, a whole genre of music was asked for that I will probably never use again.

With the dJAY+Spotify combo, I was able to find the majority of the tracks I needed that night. It allowed me to get some tracks I couldn't have gotten elsewhere, and saved me money on my night's iTunes bill.

For a total of \$10 monthly and \$10 for the dJAY app it's another tool that I recommend having in your music arsenal. **MB**

www.spotify.com/
www.algoriddim.com



E-Beat News

Akai Professional (www.akaipro.com) has announced availability of the **iMPC Pro app for iPad** (\$12.99 intro / \$19.99 reg. price in the App Store). Developed in concert with Retronyms, iMPC Pro fuses the acclaimed workflow of the hardware MPC (Music Production Center) with cutting-



edge tools for composing, editing and mixing music. The all-new iMPC Pro app includes over 30 in-demand features to empower the creative process. Highlights include: 64 tracks of multi-track music creation, mixing and automation; all-new multi-touch interface for the editing, slicing and auditioning of samples; Inter-App Audio support provides flexible sampling, effects and audio

routing; Timeline View; Flux Mode for real-time or automated manipulation of tracks; extensive sound library featuring 1,400+ samples from Richard Devine; 3D-performance mode for tweaking effects; and much more.

Denon DJ (www.denondj.com) has announced the inclusion of a full version of **Serato DJ** with their **MC6000mk2 controller**, including immediate support for Serato's newly unveiled DVS Expansion Pack, enabling turntablists to use the MC6000mk2 as an interface for sending Serato NoiseMap™ signals using the controller's USB connection. The MC6000mk2 is the only controller in its class to provide out-of-box

support for Serato NoiseMap™ timecode control signals.

The MC6000mk2 features 4 decks of software control and 4 independent channels of audio mixing, letting the user combine the best of computer-based DJing with external sources. Other features of the controller include: Integrated 2-in, 2-out USB audio interface; 2 mic inputs with 3-band EQ and Echo effect; and pro-grade steel construction.

Titanmix (www.titanmix.com) a platform aiming to supply an arsenal of tools that will assist in DJs' day to day operations, is opening its services to a limited number of beta testers. For interested DJs this is the perfect opportunity to get involved and request the features that you want.

As it stands, Titanmix provides a robust, cloud-based form-building application that allows creation of forms for any type of event. These forms can be shared with clients, which they can fill out and save to the cloud. Once the forms are saved, DJs have instant access to them and can review and print out the customer data contained within. The system also provides a quick and easy Live Request service, allowing anyone at a DJ's event to visit their Titanmix page and submit a song request.



More features are planned. To sign up for the beta, please e-mail beta@titanmix.com and let us know the username you would like. Slots are limited and on a first come, first serve basis. **MB**

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Playing with the P-Series

CERWIN-VEGA'S POWERED, PORTABLE FAMILY EXPANDS

By Robert Lindquist



In the proverbial psychobabble of marketing, “P” words have “POP.” They get attention. They punctuate.

On the flip side, it’s a precariously perilous perpendicular that separates “power,” “punch,” and “potent” from “pricey,” “paunchy,” and “pathetic.” Where loudspeakers are concerned, the pragmatic method for eliminating the pretenders is with the politics of the dance floor—where we can observe scientifically what happens when sound energy strikes the ears of real warm bodies.

With that objective in mind, we set out to evaluate the P-Series from Cerwin-Vega. This is a trio of amplified loudspeakers with a high

potential. If you know the Cerwin-Vega brand, then you know there’s a reputation here for really putting the LOUD in loudspeaker.

P IS FOR...

The P1000X and P1500X are two-way powered speakers inside thick polymer shells. At 37 and 53 pounds respectively, they are hefty but quite manageable. The weight is distributed quite evenly, so if you need to hand carry them any distance, they won’t twist your wrists. And, (I like this) there are rubber grips on all the handles. These two attributes combine to make them easier to lug around and load onto sticks than many other speakers in this size and weight class.

The P1000X is rated at 1000 watts peak, with a 10” LF driver, one 3/4” tweeter and an SPL rating (1W@1m) of 128 dB. The P1500X is rated at 1500 watts peak with a 15” LF driver. The high frequency driver is the same one used in the P1000X, but the SPL rating takes a substantial hop to 134dB. With nominal coverage of 90° horizontal, 65° vertical, two of these tops can sweep a medium size room effortlessly.

The power modules on both models are identical in appearance. There’s a three-channel mixer with two XLR ins for mic or line level sources. For channel three, your options are limited to two 1/4” phone plugs, but before you toss the shipping box, make sure you check it for that little plastic bag with the two RCA to 1/4” adapters. Kudos to the engineers for thinking of that. And, be sure to read through the manual, as there are numerous clever ways to configure this system.

One of the things I like most about powered speakers is the redundant backup inherent in having two amps; but what if your mixer goes down? The way C-V has designed these, you could connect a mic and a music source to the mixer on the back of one of the speakers, and then run an XLR to XLR cable

from the Mix output to the input of the other.

As you would expect, there is also a Master gain control and individual channel volume controls along with switches for Enhanced EQ, Vega Bass Boost, high-pass filtering, and the front limiter light. The panel is laid out very well and inset deep enough so that all knobs and switches are protected in the event you knock one over and it lands on the panel side. The volume knobs are small, but are made of a soft material that makes thumb and single digit adjustments very easy and precise.

The third member of the trio is the P1800SX. It’s rated at 2000 watts peak and 725 watts continuous, and has a single 18” low frequency driver. With SPL at 136 dB, this bad boy has no problem rattling the bones of even the freakiest Freak-a-zoids who report to the dance floor. Even with the gain at 50%, it moves a lot of air. Unlike the man-made molded material of the two-way tops, if you trace the family tree for the sub’s cabinet, you’ll find it includes only...trees. That’s good, because wood can be a pretty “dead” material acoustically, and while it’s heavier than plastics, it’s less prone to weird resonances or unexpected stage dives.

THE GIGS

For the first night out we brought the two P1500X two-ways and one sub. It was a wedding reception in a medium size room, almost perfectly square, with a wall of windows opposite our set up (of course). The 35mm pole sockets on the P1500X allow for flat or a 7.5° degree tilt, so with all that glass dead ahead, we set it for 7.5° before hoisting them onto our Frankenstands. We then ran



the two leads from the processor rack to Inputs 1 and 2 on the sub, and a left/right split from sub's Thru 1 & 2 (just follow the handy arrows) to the top boxes.

All back-panel switches were set to "off," except for the high pass filter. We wanted that on so that the subs wouldn't be wasting watts on frequencies that the tops had covered. Back-panel switches on the tops were all set at "off." As the evening went on, we continued to inch up the gain on the speakers, as well as what was coming from the board, and never ran out of headroom. The sound was every bit of fantastic. Very clear, no distortion, and lots of loud. And it's a good loud, featuring a thundering bass that strikes the sternum with a relentless but pleasant pummeling of thumps and punches.

The second time out was a wedding ceremony followed by a reception in a nearby tent. For the ceremony, we needed an mic for the officiant, a readers' mic and a music source (iPad). The P1000X proved perfect for this. It may look small, but it can cover a seated crowd of 125-150 quite easily without breaking a sweat.

For the tent, we had brought just the two P1500X tops. The bride had requested primarily oldies, so a sub seemed like overkill. She insisted that she knew her guests. Fail. Turned out they mostly wanted Top 40 and dance music. Without a sub, our alternative was to turn on the Vega Bass Boost and crank up the volume. While, IMHO, it still would have been nice to have a sub, nobody on the dance floor cared. There was still lots of bottom with plenty of headroom. Plus, it gave us a chance to really push the Class D amps in these for an extended period of time to see what issues we would encounter. There were none. Even when dealing with a compressed signal, everything still held together.

PERFECTION?

We noted two minor flaws. First, given the overall quality and performance of the P-Series represented, I was surprised to see that one of the subs had gotten past quality control missing one of the screws that secures the power module. No biggie, as there's a Lowes just a few miles away, but still worth noting, as that's what we do.

The second thing was more annoying and applied only to P1000X. There is a cool gizmo on the pole sockets that clenches the pole and holds the speaker tight to the stand. But it has a downside, so listen up. When you take the speaker off of the stand, make sure that you retract the fitting all the way back into the speaker. If you don't, the fitting will protrude beyond the "feet" so when you set it down it may fall over. I learned this the hard way when one of the speakers took a tumble down an asphalt walk way. Damage was limited to contusions and abrasions. The speaker still works fine, but I do wish I had not done that. It really messed up the grill and scuffed the sides. So much for that "new speaker" look. As adamant as I am about warning stickers on gear, this is one time I wish there had been one that just said: "Attention Idiots: Retract pole socket ALL THE WAY before setting speaker down or you'll be kicking yourself in the butt on the way home."

These minor blips in my P-Series experience aside, I can certainly say this group of powered speakers certainly provided a potent combination of precision sound and pounding loudness—enough to make any mobile DJ's musical presentation really POP. **MB**



*After a 20-year broadcast radio career, Robert Lindquist built a successful mobile DJ business, and by the late '80s he had also written his first book, *Spinnin'*, a DJ how-to. In 1990, he became the founding publisher of *Mobile Beat*. With the *Live2Play* Network (www.L2pnet.com), aimed at the live sound realm, he has pioneered online publishing. Along with being a broadcaster, publisher and Internet pioneer, he's also a sax player, writer, gear reviewer and one of the regulars behind the board at his local church.*



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Small Cab Packs Big Punch

EV'S ETX-10P IS 10" OF MAJOR SONIC IMPACT

By Jim Weisz

For the last 10 years, 12" speakers have been my speaker of choice for my sound system. Back when I did school dances, I preferred 15" cabinets. But once I made the transition to primarily weddings and small private parties, I felt like a 12" speaker was the perfect size.

It seems like advances in technology allow for things to get smaller while also being better. For example, I carry a 32 GB flash drive with me for backup that has over 1000 top songs on it. It is a thumb drive, so it's insanely small, especially when you consider the storage capability.

I am always looking for ways to make my system more efficient. If I can make my system smaller, or lighter, and not sacrifice quality (or even make it better), I am eager to give it a shot. So when I saw the specs on the new ETX-10P speakers, I couldn't wait to get my hands on a pair.



Jim Weisz owns Discovery DJ & Lighting in Dallas. His company provides DJ and lighting services for over 70 weddings a year. In addition to running his company, he also handles all music services for DJs and radio stations for TM Studios. Jim has been writing for Mobile Beat for more than a decade.

I was excited when I found out I would get the opportunity to check out the new ETX line from Electro-Voice. However, they were in such demand, it was almost a month from the time EV contacted Mobile Beat about the review until the speakers arrived.

I had events DJ almost every weekend in May and the first half of June, but by the time they arrived, I didn't have any weddings lined up for a few weeks. So I enlisted the help of a DJ friend, Jason Esquire, so I could review them. It actually turned out to be a perfect turn of events.

SOUNDING MUCH BIGGER THAN THEY LOOK

The wedding where I tried out the speakers was a pretty large affair with about 300 guests. The venue can usually accommodate two weddings at once, or they can open the air wall for one large wedding.

When I arranged this with Jason, he let me know he was planning on running four tops and a sub for this wedding. So he used two ETX-10Ps as two of the four speakers for the night.

After we had everything connected, Jason cued up a song and hit play. I walked about 25 feet in front of the system and thought it sounded amazing. I asked Jason if he could turn off the other 2 speakers he had hooked up. He let me know they were off. I heard a lot of

bass so I asked him if the sub was off. He checked and confirmed it was in fact off. I was shocked. All of this sound was being put out by two 10" speakers?

I trusted Jason, but I had to see for myself. So I walked over to the other speakers and sub to confirm they were off. They really were. Now I had to walk out front again to hear what I now knew to be just the ETXs. Crystal clear. Excellent bass. Impressed isn't the right word to describe what I was thinking—maybe mesmerized? Whatever the word was, I was in disbelief at how great they sounded.

THE SPECS FOR SUCCESS

Electro-Voice has promoted their new ETX line as having tour-quality technologies, saying the speakers employ "the same proprietary FIR-Drive developed for EV concert/touring loudspeakers." Countless venues around the world also use EV speakers, and now DJs can use speakers that include some of the same special EV sauce that makes them so popular with club owners and sound techs.

The ETX speaker line features 10", 12", and 15" two-way speakers, as well as a 15" three-way. All of the speakers feature a 2000-watt, class D amplifier with integrated FIR-Drive DSP. That same proprietary system mentioned above that they have in their concert & touring

speakers—yeah, it's in these cabinets.

The back of the speaker includes a sleek LCD display for accessing the built-in DSP. You can adjust quite a few settings, including master volume control, location presets (tripod or mounted), with/without sub, among many other features. One feature I was surprised to see was delay, which EV says can be used for a delay setting up speakers several hundred feet apart.

I have few gripes, one of which is they are just a little heavy, at 44.8 lbs. However, I know it is because of the heavy-duty components used in the speaker. In addition to being a wood cabinet (18-mm, 13 ply, birch plywood), EV touts that “no off-the-shelf components are used” in the ETX line. Rather than being plastic, the handles, pole cups, and amplifier chassis are aluminum. Knowing the level of components they put into these speakers, I am willing to lift a few extra pounds in exchange for a much higher quality of speaker.

THEY'RE LOUD, BUT HOW DO THEY SOUND?

I checked the speakers out a couple of weeks ago and I still remember how loud they were. But did they sound good? In a word, yes. During the demo, I asked Jason to get on the mic so I could hear how announcements and toasts would sound. I stood as far away from the system as I could and everything sounded crystal clear. Interestingly, Jason had primarily planned on using four speakers for this venue to ensure the guests in the back of the room would hear announcements and toasts. I wondered that day if he even needed four speakers—I think it would've sounded great with just the two ETX-10Ps.

OK, so they're loud and deliver crystal clear sound. How about the bass? I would not hesitate at all to say they have better bass than my current 12" powered speakers. Yes, you read that right—a 10" speaker that has better bass than a 12" speaker. I'm sure it's mainly a combination of the top-shelf components with the 2000-watt amplifier, but it doesn't matter to me how they achieve it; the bass is fantastic.

POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENTS

If it sounds like I love these speakers, I do kind of have a crush on them. They look great (I really like the finish on them), sound great, and are smaller than my current cabinets. So I am planning on getting a pair of these in the near future to become my main speakers. However, I would like to see a few things changed on the next generation of these speakers.

The first thing I would like to see is an extra handle. You would think since they



are 10" speakers you could easily carry them with one handle. However, at nearly 45 pounds, they can be a little awkward to get on a stand without another handle. I'm not picky where the other handle is—the other side or the top, but an additional grabbing point would be very helpful.

I'd also like to see RCA jacks on the back. I'm not sure why EV chose to leave them off, but I can't believe it would take up much space or add much to the price to include them. It's a nice option for someone wanting to use an 1/8" to RCA cable right into the speaker. Since they don't have RCAs, most DJs will need an RCA to 1/4" adapter.

Finally, as mentioned, I'd really love these speakers if they were more like 40 pounds. But 45 pounds is still very manageable and I understand that the better components make them weigh more.

Oh, and if you were wondering about where we had the speakers set when I was so blown away by not only the level of volume, but the crispness, and bass—the master volume was set to 0 dB, the channel volume at about 12 o'clock. Rocking a pretty large venue at those settings...not too bad for a little 10" speaker! **MB**

www.electro-voice.com



Behringer Offers Bigger Bang for Buck

ON THE ROAD WITH BEHRINGER'S B615D POWERED LOUDSPEAKERS

By Robert Lindquist



When you go to the Behringer Website and click on loudspeakers > portable, the choices are, at first, quite overwhelming. The Eurolive series alone offers everything from 300W 2-ways with 8" LF drivers to 2200W cabinets with dual 15" woofers. In the mix you'll find something for almost every application, with features such as integrated mixers and wireless operation. So selecting a model for this evaluation was a bit daunting. To meet my criteria, I needed something that would be reliable, loud, and be of a manageable size and weight.

My first choice might have been the B2520 Pro, the 2200-watt monsters that I spoke of previously. But in reality, a speaker of this size, power and weight is not exactly what I would consider as a "go-to" rig, so after some inner debate, I went back to the tried and true 15" 2-way design and requested the B615D.

Out of the box, or should I say, "while trying to get them out of the box," it becomes apparent that terms such as "lightweight" and "compact" are relative. These are in the same size and weight class (58 lbs) as most other molded 15" 2-ways. They are not back-breakers, but they can be a bit awkward to lug around. The molded plastic cases are tight, solid, and rattle free. The handles are placed vertically, one on each side, and provide well-balanced lifting points. The wedge design allows them to function either as front-of-house main speakers or floor monitors. While they are similar in size to others in this category, they do possess a bit of a fashionable flair with a unique indentation across the center of the front grilles. It doesn't make them any louder, but at least it makes them different.

The specs, (and the semi-obnoxious shiny chrome labels on the fronts), claim a combined maximum output of 1500 watts from the two high-current amps tucked inside the cabinet. One amp drives the 15" woofer and the other a 1.75" titanium compression driver. SPL is rated at 125dB @ 1 meter. Whereas many loud speaker brands use parts supplied by a third party, Behringer is one of the few that actually makes all their own drivers. I recently had the opportunity to tour the Behringer factory in China and was quite impressed with the operation. And, as you'd expect, by making many of the parts in-house, Behringer is able to keep the cost down on the finished units.

INS AND OUTS

The back panel on the B615D is clean and simple. There's a 1/4" in for balanced TRS and unbalanced TS plugs and an XLR mic/line connection. A single XLR link output can be used when passing the signal on to another powered speaker. A level control with clip light facilitates

adjusting output volume. Note that the mic pre-amp kicks in right at 12 o'clock, so if the signal coming out of your board is hot, things can get loud real fast.

ON THE ROAD

Everything now is about digital signal processing, a.k.a. DSP. It's made a huge difference in the sonic experience you present to your audiences. This is why it's more important than ever to conduct good A-B comparisons before you plunk down a grand or two or three or more for new speakers. Call me anal (and many have) but if I can't get the sound the way I want it, then I don't want those speakers.

Over the last few months I've had the pair of B615Ds out on several jobs, from providing PA in a large arena to outdoor wedding receptions. In terms of how they sound, the B615Ds proved to be quite pleasant to work with. For the arena PA gig, which was mostly vocal announcements, there's was little to do beyond set 'em up, turn 'em on and leave them be for four days. The receptions, however, allowed for a little more creative soundcrafting. They responded nicely to a little aural exciting and compression, allowing me to dial in the dynamics I wanted and still keep the sound focused on the dance floor (well, mostly).

Raised up with some new F2 stands from Frankenstand, we had all the volume, with plenty of punchy bass and ample head room, needed to fill the tent and the surrounding grounds. I typically don't like to mess with the a speaker's on board tone controls, but these come with bass and treble controls (labeled "low" and "high") for added tweaking. Working outdoors in tents means not having to deal with sound bouncing back from hard walls, but it also takes greater volume to keep the sound consistent, especially with changing winds and weather conditions. The B615Ds handled the challenge brilliantly.

GEEK SPEAK

The DSP on the BB615D teams with an active 2-way electronic crossover, graphic EQ, parametric EQ, mic preamp, and limiter, with the two Class-D power amps. According to Behringer "As output demands rise, the internal processor frees up LF amp and transducer resources by reducing program bass content, so that higher overall system volume can be realized." Good clean bass is always on the wish list, and with those 15" woofers, these do not disappoint. Bottom line? Awkwardness and shiny chrome labels aside, The Eurolive B615D sounds good, plays loud and is nicely priced at around \$450 (online), which puts it right up there near the top on the "bang-for-your-buck" list. **MB**

www.behringer.com

The Kraken

HEAVY-DUTY IPHONE SHELL

By Mike Buonaccorso

Today's technology is a paradox: While we have access to some of the most cutting-edge, extraordinary tools to assist us, at times we are well aware of just how fragile those items can be.

Ever drop your phone face down and find yourself holding your breath while you pick it up? Why is it called a phone at all anymore? Today, it's not only a virtual office but also provides media playback and storage, and much, much more.

One of the most interesting and durable items that has come my way is the Kraken A.M.S. series phone case for Apple iPhone 5s by Trident. A.M.S. stands for Adaptive Modular System. Sure it's just a phone case, but we need that extra layer of protection on all our gear. And now, even our phones are part of that. You don't transport your gear in



cardboard boxes, do you?

It's the only case that boasts meeting military testing requirements. The stated results:

- 26 drops onto concrete from 4 feet
- Vibration across 3 different axes for a total of 18 hours
- Dust blown for 3 hours at 29 ft / sec
- Sand blown for 3 hours at 59 ft / sec
- 7.9" / hr of rain at 40 mph wind velocity for 1 hour

This case has a tough exo-skeleton, featuring hardened polycarbonate with double-thick, impact-resistant silicone corners to absorb shock.

Putting on the cover was a little tricky. The box contained the instructions with some illustrations, and additionally provided a link to their YouTube video tutorials. Separating the case is more difficult, as it requires wedging a flat object between the layers of plastic to pry them apart, while you wonder if one wrong

move will cause permanent damage.

The case also includes a detachable aluminum media stand and belt clip/holster, with the option to attach a variety of interchangeable accessories. Color options include black, blue, red, pink, and green.

The Kraken A.M.S. carries a one-year warranty, and models are also available for the iPad. **MB**

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Elite Screens Kestrel Stage Series

PROFESSIONAL, PORTABLE SCREEN PROJECTS A HIGH-END IMAGE

By Mobile Beat Staff

DJs are often called upon to provide additional audio and video services to their wedding and corporate clients, and it can be a great way to make a little more money by providing additional microphones, projectors and screens. The key to making a rental work—as well as typical, repeated load-in/load-out mobile DJ use—is gear that can stand up to punishment. Elite Screens now has a road-worthy option for DJs that is really rough and tumble. Each member of the Kestrel Stage Series is stored completely in a road case, has a stylish look, and is user-friendly. Whether it's for their own gig use or as a rental, this series offers what DJs need in a projection screen.

These are portable, free standing electric screens. So, when it's needed, you can raise it up electronically, and when it's not needed it can be right out of the way. Built into a road case for easy transport, you can literally drop it in place and have it ready for an image

within a few minutes of arriving onsite. The screen is raised and lowered by a smoothly motorized "scissor-backed riser" and is extremely steady.

Because of the way things are often set up at events that we all do, the projection screen may be placed right in front of the DJ stand, with the projector out somewhere far enough away to project properly, sometimes even on the dance floor. Well, now the DJ stand doesn't have to be covered up by the screen, it can



literally be sitting on the floor and pop into place when you need it. will be available in the magazine digital edition but really to get it and how easy it really is.

These professional-quality screens are available in sizes from 100" to 154", and in aspect ratios such as 16:9, 4:3 and 16:10. The one we had to try out was 100"/16:9 (model# FE100H-TC) The screen surface is bright and super reflective, with a 1.1 gain. Additionally, the frame around the screen is done in a nice piano gloss finish that adds the finishing touch, giving the screen a high-end look, even though it's perfectly portable. It also comes with a detachable wheeled flight case that we didn't use in my review but is meant to hold skirts, projectors and cables if needed.

So, for projecting video and other imagery at corporate events, holiday parties or weddings, the Kestrel Series of screens from Elite Screens takes you way beyond the "slide-projector"-style screen you may still be using, and makes it easy to upgrade your video experience.

(See how easy the Kestrel screen is to use; check out a video of the screen we reviewed in action, in the digital edition of this issue at MobileBeat.com.)

www.elitescreens.com

A New Companion

NEW EDITION OF HELPFUL DJ TOME RELEASED

By Joshua Wetmore



The other day I was handed the *DJ Companion* 6th Edition by Rob Savickis. I was like whoa. I have been a DJ for 14 years and now I get the 6th Edition? Where was I when editions 1 through 5 came out? I need to get out more.

It says on the back cover that this is "the one book you'll literally take to every gig," and I could see that. Right now I do not take any books. When I am stumped or thinking about what I can do to take the party in a different direction, I usually head to iTunes or the internet. But say I was somewhere with a bad wifi connection and I wanted to have a quick reference book—this would be the one.

The *DJ Companion* is a reference guide covering a wide variety of topics, answering questions like "What should I play as my last song?" "How to handle holidays and special events?" "How old was Jimi Hendrix when he died?" (27, if you were wondering.) It is chock-full of anything and everything you would need to be the DJ/MC you have always wanted to be.

So, whether you are thinking of joining the mobile DJ ranks, or have been doing it for a while, the *DJ Companion* 6th Edition by Rob Savickis really is the one book you can take to every gig, if you are into that type of thing.

You can find the book at www.mobilebeat.com/store/. **MB**

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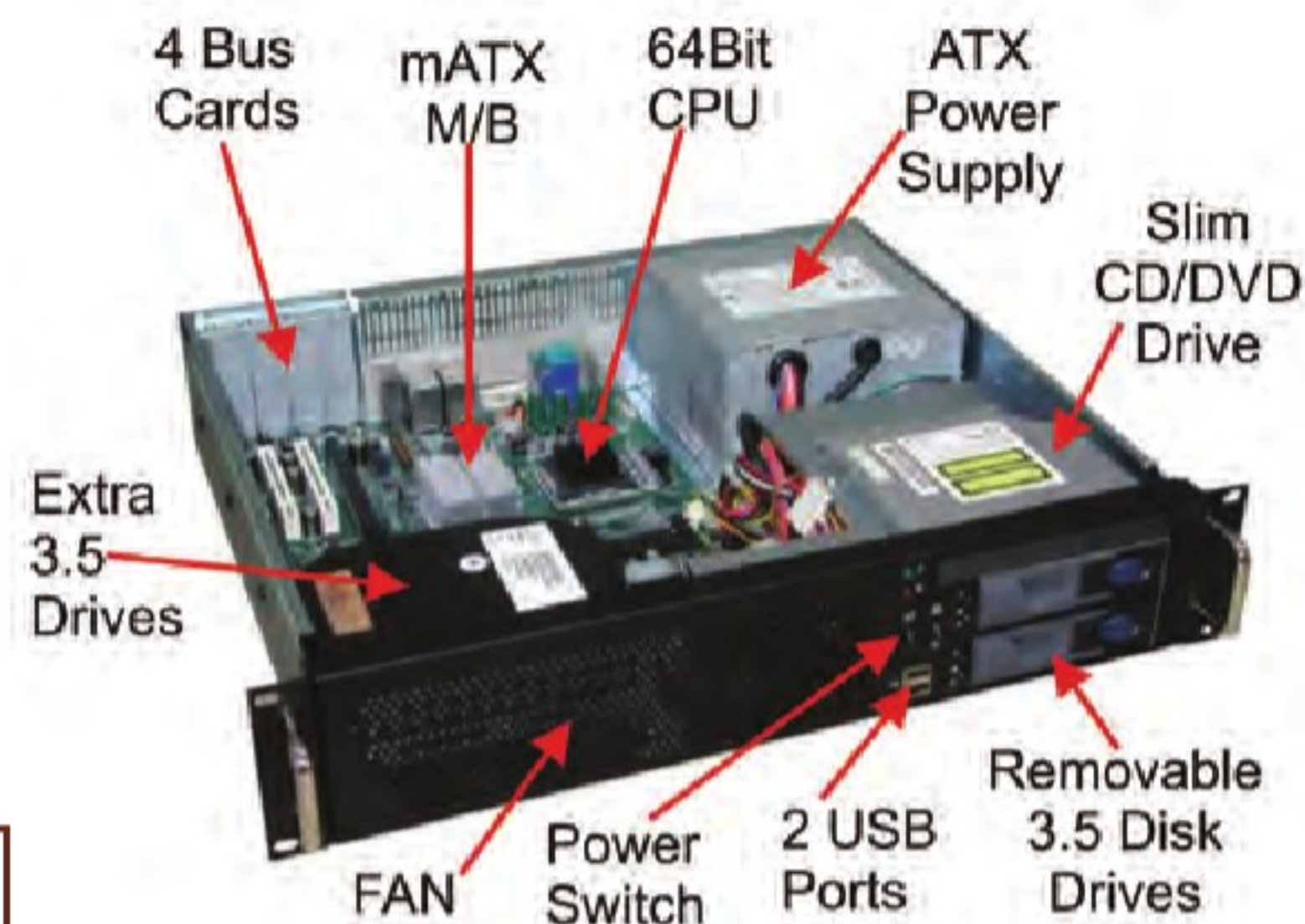
PART 2: HOW TO BUILD A RACKMOUNTED KARAOKE SYSTEM

By Richard McCoy

The best karaoke system is one that is easy to set up and use, while also being well-built and reliable. By having a system with all the components installed and hooked up within the case, the resulting setup time can be minimized and reliability increased.

CASE

A good system starts with a good case. I'll show you how to build a system within this case that only requires connections for power, audio and video. Everything will be contained within the case. It will reduce set-up time to a few minutes. Plus you'll be



Rich's System



case, with handles on each side. This configuration allows easy access to each individual component and minimizes the number of connections between each component.

COMPUTER

The heart of my system is a 2U rack mounted, custom-built computer using off-the-shelf components to help reduce cost. Based on a standard PC, the system employs all the latest technology and can be easily modified and/or updated as technology evolves. There is also a built-in redundancy (RAID 1) for emergencies. This computer allows for increased power demands for USB connections, external memory, system cooling and dual display graphics. It is also ruggedized and will absorb a lot of physical punishment and still continue to function. I used a standard XT motherboard, power supply, hard disk, low-profile video card and wi-fi card. I built this computer system about four years ago and have never had to problems with it. What's more, nobody is going to pick it up and walk away with it while I'm using the restroom.

MIXER & PLAYER

I use the VocoPro DA-1000 Pro Mixer (www.vocopro.com) to control singers' mics add some echo and for audio and video inputs. This 1U mixer features digital echo with separate repeat and delay controls for each of its three mic channels, as well as audio levels and video switching for two video sources. The first video input is connected to the computer's video card while the second is connected to a DVD/CD+G/video disc player from API (www.apikaraoke.com). This allows me to play CD+G or any other format a guest may provide on a CD or DVD. The small mixer also allows me to remove some vocals from karaoke files. I can switch between the computer video out and the DVD player video out with one button. This eliminates the switching around of cables.

The mixer is placed in the top section of the case with the CD/DVD player mounted in the front. I've also mounted a 1U four-input wireless mic system on top. This allows me to provide mics for one to three singers all with the host mic. It's mounted on top for easy access.

able to carry a greater quantity and better quality of karaoke files.

I use a lightweight molded polyethylene case from Gator (www.gatorcases.com), which has 6U (U = rack spaces in the front and 10U on top. There is also access to the rear 8U positions that are not used. This is a solid, well-balanced and easy-to-handle



Richard has been an electronics hardware/software engineer in Silicon Valley for over 45 years, and is listed on several patents. During that same time, he has also operated as a mobile DJ, doing more than 4000 shows. He has contributed to the design of chips, graphics cards, audio and video systems, computers, and even satellites, as well as DJ lighting and sound equipment, while working for companies like Fairchild, Acer and Atari.

CONTROLLER

By adding a MIDI controller, I can increase the usefulness of the system for more than just karaoke. I use the Hercules RMX controller due to its small size and generous feature set. I have the controller mounted on a 1U-high drawer that slides in and out to provide access to all the controllers' top-mounted functions. This controller (in conjunction with DJ software) allows me to control the computer and is prewired to eliminate connector and cable problems. The RMX's metal case makes it able to handle heavy-duty mobile DJ use.

CABLES

The most unreliable part of any system is the connectors and cables.

No matter how good your equipment is, if your cables and connectors have a lot of insertions and extractions, then they become the weakest links in the chain. By eliminating the repeated insertion of commonly used cables, you can increase the reliability of a system considerably. Plus, pre-wiring a system can eliminate

many hum-inducing grounding problems.

I've also added (built) a 1U strip with AC plugs, XLR connectors and 2 video outputs on the front to allow for quicker access to these signals. The XLR audio output can easily be connected to a powered speaker. The video output can be connected to a singer monitor and/or large screen projector. The top of the box has a 4" flat plate for my small-footprint keyboard and mouse (keyboards with trackballs are also available). Again, these are all pre-wired to the

computer to prevent any cable or connector damage.

This system only requires a short set-up time and is portable enough to be used at wide variety of functions and venues. The audio and video outputs on the front allow me to use this system with any size of PA system video playback unit.

Though many might consider the initial assembly cost of the system to be high, in the long run it's worth every penny. There may be lower-cost, short-term solutions, but they are only temporary and may generate many hardware problems.

As mentioned earlier, I can use this system for more than just karaoke. Along with my legal library of 15,000 karaoke songs, I carry 20,000 music videos, and over 100,000 audio selections. Combined with the DJ software I use, I have the ability to perform at just about any kind of event. And I know my system will operate reliably, gig after gig...so my clients know they can rely on me for their entertainment needs! **MB**

ITEM	MFG	MODEL	PRICE (Low)
Molded ATA Case	Gator	GRC-10X6	\$240.00
Computer (min config)	custom-built	DJ-Com-1	\$700.00
Hercules Controller	Hercules	RMX-1	\$210.00
CD/DVD Player	API	DV-330	\$135.00
4 Wireless Microphone	Hisonic	HSU8900H	\$450.00
Karaoke Mixer	VocoPro	DA-1000 Pro	\$150.00
Keyboard/Mouse (Any Style)	BTC	6100-C	\$15.00
Computer Monitor	Acer	V226WL	\$125.00
Computer Drawer (1U)	iStarUSA	WA-SFR80R	\$90.00
AC/Audio/Video Panel	custom-built	PAN-1	\$35.00
TOTAL:			\$2,150

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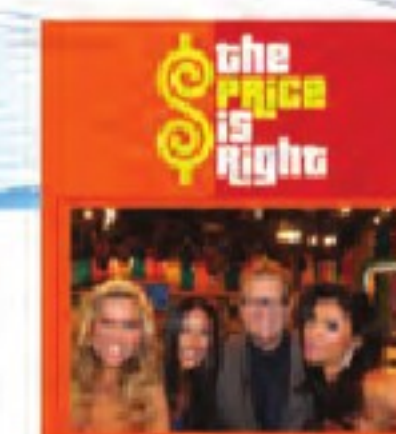
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10 Keys to Bridal Show Success

KNOW HOW TO HOOK THOSE LEADS

By Stephanie Padovani

For those DJs who are dissatisfied with their bridal show results, here's the hard truth: If your target market of brides and grooms are at the show and you don't get leads, it's your fault. You can blame the show producer if you want to, but you were fishing in a stocked pool, which means something is wrong with your bait.

The good news is that you can follow these 10 steps to turn your bridal show frown upside down.

1) SET A GOAL BEFORE THE SHOW

What do you want to get out of the bridal show? Simply writing down a goal increases the chances that you'll hit it by 30%, because it programs your brain to make it happen.

Let me give you a little hint about what your #1 goal should be: set appointments. Don't go for same day bookings or leads; set the meeting instead. Most DJs book 50% or more of their clients who end up in meetings, so knowing that you've set appointments after the show means money in the bank.

Talk to as many people as possible, qualify them quickly (see #4 below) and explain that you want them to have a chance to see everything at the show, but the best way to find out if you're a good match for the wedding is to set aside some time outside the bridal show madness. "When are you available for a meeting this week?"

2) BRIBE THEM TO THE MEETING

There's nothing wrong with a little ethical "bribe." Make it worth the couple's while to set and actually show up for their appointment. Give them a free \$20 gift card to pay for their gas, for example, or some other no-strings-attached freebie.

Sure, this is going to cost you a little money. But if you know that you'll book 50% of the couples who meet with you, is it worth paying \$20 for a

chance to sit down with that qualified lead? Absolutely.

3) DESIGN A BOOTH THE CLEARLY BROADCASTS WHAT YOU DO AND ATTRACTS ATTENTION

Your goal is to get the meeting, but in order to set that appointment you need to get their attention first. You need a booth that says, "Notice me!"

The easiest way to do this is to go vertical with your booth. Don't settle for a flat table top display. You need something tall with a sign that's clearly visible from across the room so that couples instantly recognize what you do.

Use lighting and provocative imagery to attract attention. One photographer I know uses a giant photo of a poodle in a bridal veil as a conversation starter. There's no reason you can't display your own super large photo of a break dancing bride to stop those passing couples in their tracks.

Whatever you do, make sure your booth is completely different from everyone else's. That means making bold choices.

4) QUALIFY COUPLES IMMEDIATELY WHEN YOU MEET THEM

A young woman walks up to your bridal show booth. What do you say?

Your goal is to set as many meetings as possible. You don't have time to waste talking to someone who isn't in the market for your services. You need to qualify her. Find out:

- Whose wedding is she planning? Is she the bride-to-be? A bridesmaid? Is she there for the free food?
- Is she still looking for a DJ?
- Are you available for her date?

If any of these questions disqualifies her as a real lead, wish her well and gracefully move on to the next conversation. She'll be grateful that you didn't waste her time.

5) COLLECT YOUR OWN LEADS

The leads you collect right at your booth will be much warmer than those on the bridal show lead list. Host a giveaway contest to collect the name, wedding date, venue and contact information of every couple, so that you can follow up with them later.

Your prize should have real value and be given with no strings attached, in order to maximize your leads. In other words, forget the \$100-off coupon. Instead, give away a romantic dinner for two at a well known, high-end restaurant or give the winner a new iPhone.

Yes, again, this costs some money, but it's an investment! You'll get the chance to talk to more couples as they approach your booth to enter the contest, which means you'll set more appointments, which means you'll book more weddings. In addition, they're going to leave you their best contact information instead of the usual spam email address.

6) STAY ALL THE WAY TO THE END AND DON'T LEAVE YOUR BOOTH!

It's tempting to mosey over to the cake samples and leave your booth unattended or to take a long break during the fashion show. But those quiet moments are often the perfect time to engage with a couple who's taking the opportunity to stroll around without the crowd. When you leave your booth, you miss out on leads.

Whatever you do, don't start packing up before the show is over. It irritates the show producers and looks like you can't wait to leave. After a long day, that's probably true, but it's not an impression that makes couples want to book you. In addition, hanging out until the very end means you'll be there to engage that last lingering couple while your competitors are racing to the parking lot.



Stephanie Padovani and her husband, Jeff, are the dynamic husband-wife duo behind Book More Brides, the #1 marketing resource for the wedding industry. Visit BookMoreBrides.com/priceshopper to learn "How to Position Yourself as a Valued Wedding Expert in Only Five Minutes."

7) CHERRY PICK THAT LEAD LIST AND CONTACT THE VERY BEST LEADS FIRST

Most DJs fail at the most important key to bridal show success: follow up. When you're staring at that list of hundreds of names, you need a strategy to maximize your results.

1. Contact the leads you collected yourself first. These are people who actually visited your booth, and they're your hottest leads.

2. Sift through the lead list and highlight weddings at the venues and zip codes that indicate a big wedding budget. If you work the high-end market, the Elks Club wedding is probably not the couple for you. Contact these high-end leads next.

3. Contact the remaining dates you have open that you'd like to book.

Follow up takes some time, and contacting the hottest leads first increases your chances of reaching and booking them before your competition.

8) MAKE A COMPELLING LIMITED TIME OFFER

How do you follow up in a way that turns those leads into meetings and booked weddings? We all know that very few couples pick up the phone any more, and getting them to respond to email is even more difficult.

You need to give those couples a compelling reason to call you back. Sorry, the privilege of booking you just isn't compelling enough—unless you happen to be a celebrity DJ or international superstar.

Your offer could be this simple, "I'm giving a free \$20 Starbucks gift card to every couple who meets with me by Friday." Or, "Our fall special is ending this week, offering a free monogram gobo to every couple who books by the 15th."

Make it worth their while to call you back and set that meeting.

9) SEND DIRECT MAIL INSTEAD OF EMAIL

Email is free and easy to send, which is why everyone does it. It's also highly ineffective. Only 11% of email even gets opened!

Imagine this: the day after the bridal show, the bride opens up her email inbox to dozens of emails from every wedding pro at the show. Your email is buried in a pile of spam. Delete! The smartest brides won't even see those emails because they used a designated "wedding spam" email when registering for the show to filter out the advertising blitz.

The physical mail box, on the other hand, is practically empty these days. It's easy to stand out from the competition when you send a direct mail piece.

Take it to the next level by sending your very hottest leads a "lumpy mailer"—a package containing a small gift branded to your business. The targeted bride is guaranteed to open it and you immediately have her attention.

10) FOLLOW UP, FOLLOW UP, FOLLOW UP...AND REPEAT

Most wedding DJs follow up, at most, ONCE after the show. If you really want to get that return on investment, follow up multiple times in multiple mediums: telephone, direct mail, email.

How many times should you follow up? Until the couple tells you've they've booked someone else, until the wedding date passes, or until you've booked your calendar so full you couldn't possibly take another wedding.

These couples are busy and overwhelmed with planning. Booking their DJ may have dropped down the long list of things to do for the wedding. Be the one who keeps following up so that you're top of mind when they are ready to book.

The next time you're tempted to whine about how bridal shows "don't work" to book weddings, use these 10 steps as a checklist to evaluate your performance. It's a recipe that works when you take action. **MB**

The Questions Spin...

Was a monkey once trained to be a Mobile DJ?



Who was widely acclaimed as the world's first Mobile DJ but after his death in 2011 was exposed for his criminal life?

Will the Soho section of New York City be the future site of the Mobile DJ Museum?



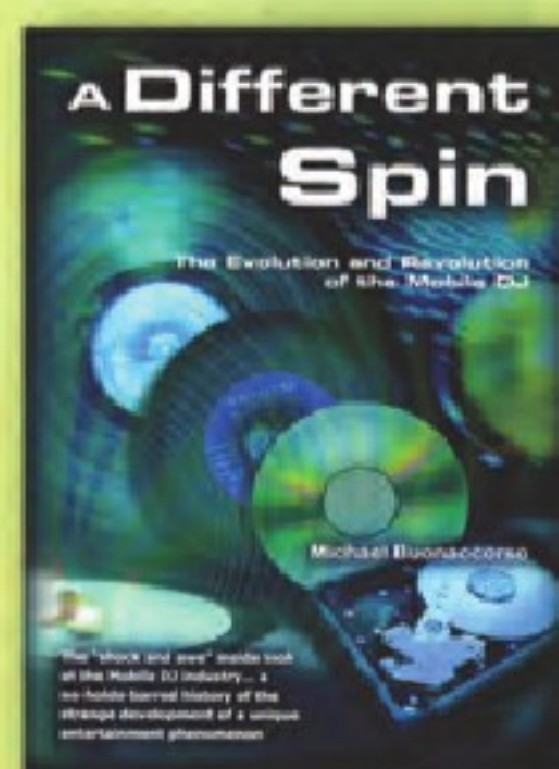
Who developed a line of DJ speakers in red, yellow, purple, and two shades of blue?

In 1997, how did the release of the motion picture *Titanic* spur a DJ craze? Or did it?



Just who was Mobile Beat's "Dr." Shock Jock" and what did he say to cause such a controversy?

What was the largest scandal ever involving Mobile Beat Magazine, and who were the players?



Find the **REAL** stories behind these questions and much more, in ***A Different Spin: The DJ History Book*** by Mobile Beat Co-Founder **Michael Buonaccorso**

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How to Book Your Next Senior Gig

TIPS AND TRICKS FOR ACCESSING ASSISTED LIVING OPPORTUNITIES

By Jim Papa

Looking to earn additional income? Want to book more gigs? Want to perform for people who look forward to and appreciate your talent? Take advantage of a growing market, contact an assisted living facility and book your next senior gig.*

When contacting an assisted living facility with the goal of booking more gigs, it is extremely important that you find out up front who is *really* in charge. Most places employ a Director of Recreation, an Executive Director or a Recreation Manager.



Ask to speak to
the person most
responsible
for hiring
entertainment.

These people are responsible for the Recreation Department, its budget and its recreation/activity schedule. Some of the managers get involved and personally hire entertainers while many others leave the responsibility of booking talent to various members of their recreation staff.

Many places post their recreation/activity schedule online. There you may find a contact name and get an idea of the type of entertainment they book. Don't try to call the contact right away. These positions turn over frequently. The contact name may not be current. If you call, the receptionist will probably tell you that the person you are looking for is not available while never offering the fact that that person has left the company or has been re assigned to a different position. You may find yourself playing phone tag and wasting your time.

The best way to make sure that you get the correct decision maker's name is to call and ask to speak to the person most responsible for hiring entertainment. That's right, "most responsible." And notice that I said "hiring entertainment," not hiring a DJ. Receptionists are the company gatekeepers. They get sales calls all day long. They are trained to screen, deflect and even dismiss calls. By asking in this way they tend to answer your question without thinking about or deflecting the call. Also receptionists know that entertainers are hired but they may not see a need for a DJ. They are rarely involved in party planning, therefore they are not privy to all of the departments' activities and recreation plans. Most facilities do hire DJs on occasion.

Once you are sure you have the right contact, call them. Asking for someone specific makes it easier for the receptionist, and chances are they will put your call through without asking why. If you are told that the specific person is busy or they are not available they probably are not. If they offer to connect you to voicemail say yes but never actually leave a message. The decision maker does not know you. Unless you are lucky and there is an immediate need, even if you leave a message they won't call you back. The next time you call the receptionist may remember that you left a message and assume that you have had a conversation with the decision maker. In fact when you call back mention that that you left a message before. Remember, don't actually leave a message just go through the motions.

Before you meet with a recreation staff member, double check and make sure that the person is the one fully in charge of booking entertainment and that they do not need any one else's permission to book you. Be on your guard against people who take meetings without being qualified to do so. Some people just like to feel important in front of their peers and will meet with you just to look busy or to impress others. Nothing is more frustrating then meeting with a contact to explain what you can do, only to find out that they can not book you.

Lets assume you book a gig. During the event make sure that you let the residents know who you are and that you would love to come back and do more. Most facilities encourage their residents to join their resident committees. These committees give the residents a chance to share their thoughts about everything that goes on in the facility, including discussions of which entertainers they enjoyed and would like to see back. Go out of your way to impress the residents. Talk to them, not *at* them. Try to relate to their lives. Talk about the old days and some of their favorite songs. Most places will not bring you back no matter how good you are if the residents don't like you. Don't be afraid to give out your business cards. This will help them remember your name.

Find the person most responsible for hiring entertainment, let them know what you do best, during the gig make sure you let the residents feel relevant and have some fun. This will go a long way in booking your next senior gig.

* According to the Assisted Living Federation of America in 2009 there were more than 36,000 assisted living facilities in the United States. **MB**



A born performer, Jim Papa has been singing since age eight, and in 1996, began Magical Music Entertainment, a karaoke/DJ entertainment business based on Long Island. In 2001 he decided to live out his dream and made Magical Music a full time venture. Since then he has entertained at hundreds of weddings, private parties, fund raisers and more. Today he sings and entertains at over two hundred events a year and has become one of the area's most requested entertainers.



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* PATENT PENDING

Odyssey's Scrim Werks™ Light Columns create dramatic lighting effects using portable aluminum frames and scrim sleeves, ranging in height from 1ft to 10ft tall. Odyssey's patent-pending columns are sturdy, lightweight and cost-effective alternative solutions to traditional square truss setups. Designed with portability in mind, the columns easily setup within minutes and ship in a flat and compact footprint. Each column design consists of 4 individual aluminum tubes, top and bottom plates, and a corresponding scrim sleeve

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How to Hold Their Attention

BRAND MESSAGING IN THE 140-CHARACTER WORLD, PART 2

By John Stiernberg

In the last issue, we talked about electronic media and the challenge of managing your customer's attention. Your elevator pitch needs to start with 140 punchy characters (the Twitter metaphor) and invite customers to click through to get the details. But how do I make sure that they stay on my website or social media page long enough to understand what I'm selling?

Will paying for search engine optimization (SEO) make a difference? Are there pitfalls to avoid? This article (part 2 of 2) takes a closer look at managing your customer's attention and suggests three action tips for creating a compelling online presence.

LONGER IS NOT BETTER—MAKE IT MODULAR

Let's say that you have successfully convinced prospective customers to visit your website or Facebook/LinkedIn page. What then? You need to answer six questions, and do it in a modular, bit-sized way. Here are the six questions:

1. What does your company do? State the obvious and keep it brief. You are a mobile entertainer and your focus is on the kind of events and clientele that are described in your elevator pitch.

2. How are you better than and different from the alternatives? This is more about the other forms of entertainment programming (or no programming at all) than it is about competitive DJs. Mention your track record, focus, and list of services

beyond providing music (e.g. video, karaoke, gaming, MC, recording, etc.).

3. Answer their question, "Why is all that good for me?" Clients will not hire you if they do not understand the benefits. Sure, they are in the market for mobile entertainment, but they also need to feel good about it. Remind them of things like happier guests, peace of mind before and during the event, and value for their investment.

The other three questions follow the flow of any good promotional message: promise, offer, and call to action. Spelling it out in Q&A format:

4. One more time, why should I hire you? This is your opportunity to summarize your brand promise. Tell them (in slightly different words) what they get when they engage you or your company.

5a. Is there anything special going on now that would make a difference? This is your opportunity to do a trial close, such as, "When you 'like' this page and book your event, we'll include a souvenir playlist" (or whatever—offer something extra).

6. What do I do next? If they get this far (let's hope so), they still need to take action. Give them an option to 1) call your phone number to arrange a time to talk about your event details or 2) "click here" to fill in a brief input form about your event with no obligation.

So, what about SEO?

SHOULD I PAY FOR SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION (SEO)?

Search engines like Google, Bing, and Yahoo charge for advertising. They do not charge for search engine optimization. Configuring your website and online presence for SEO only costs you what you pay your website developer or digital media agency. Here are three critical elements to keep in mind when you create online content.

1. Use of keywords. Words like "deejay," "music," "entertainment," and "events" get you part of the way there, but they are too generic. You need to narrow the focus for your target clients by adding modifiers like "mobile deejay" or "corporate event entertainment."

2. Frequent changes and additions to the site. Since search engines constantly look for new things, they will "optimize"



John Stiernberg is founder and principal consultant with Stiernberg Consulting (www.stiernberg.com). John has over 25 years experience in the music and entertainment technology field. He currently works with audio and music companies and others on strategic planning and market development. His book *Succeeding In Music: Business Chops for Performers and Songwriters* is published by Hal Leonard Books. Contact John via e-mail at john@stiernberg.com, or on LinkedIn and Facebook. Follow him at <http://twitter.com/JohnStiernberg>.

a prospective client's search by including recent updates and news at the top of the search results list—not two-plus-year-old, static pages.

3. Third-party links and references. Getting other people to talk about you on their sites will help drive traffic to yours. This is behind the concept of "likes" on Facebook or LinkedIn.

Once your online presence is "optimized," then it may make sense to experiment with paid advertising. If it is not optimized, paying for ads is a waste of your money. The leading search engines have guidelines and FAQs for all this.

OPTIMIZING YOUR ONLINE BRAND PRESENCE

While your website or social media presence alone will not close sales, they are essential elements in your branding and competitive positioning. Here are three action tips for turning clicks into prospective clients.

Action Tip 1. Cover the six questions fully but briefly. Be accurate and inviting. Don't disparage competitors, but describe the differences in a compelling way. Make sure that the promise, offer, and call to action flow naturally and make it easy for your prospects to respond online or pick up the phone.

Action Tip 2. Make the messaging modular. The buzzword for this is "Click here for more." What a great tool! Digital media allows

Digital media allows you to tell your story in layers. As the prospect gets more interested, she or he clicks through to a deeper level.

you to tell your story in layers. As the prospect gets more interested, she or he clicks through to a deeper level. Assuming that you can capture their activity in a report from your Internet service provider, you've got valuable information that can drive the sales process.

Action Tip 3: Measure effectiveness. In addition to basic ISP statistics, use tools like Google

Analytics to determine how many visitors clicked through beyond your home page and which pages hold their attention the longest. Not getting enough click-throughs? Change the content, add embedded keywords, and link to other sites—then measure again.

HERE'S THE POINT...

Getting a prospect to visit you online is only the start. Managing their attention so that they stay with it, click through, and ultimately contact you is the bigger—yet manageable challenge. Remember to complete the Action Tips in sequence: 1) Tell your story in compelling language; 2) make your online presence modular and layered; and 3) measure the results and make adjustments frequently.

Next issue we'll talk more about how to deal with those pesky clients that want to "curate" (program) their own shows. In the meantime, best wishes for big success in 2014! **MB**



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"Can I Sue My DJ?"

By Rob Schenk

Unfortunately, I get this questions quite often. Too often, really. Unfortunately, the threat of a lawsuit by an angry client is real. With websites like Legal Zoom providing the gunpowder for the legal do-it-yourselfers, the potential is out there. Here are two common lawsuits that are brought against DJs.

BREACH OF CONTRACT

Out of all the claims that are brought against DJs, this one is the most common. A breach of contract to a DJ service contract occurs where the event professional either doesn't provide the services promised, or fails to deliver the entirety of the services promised.

The more successful lawsuits against DJs are those in which the DJ didn't show, or was either late or left early. The less successful lawsuits involve the allegation that the DJ's services, both as a "performer" or "MC" of the event, were substandard. For example, being lifeless, consistently not playing the correct music, consistently not playing the music agreed to beforehand, or failing to perform at the proper cues.

If the client is successful in such a lawsuit, the court will award "expectation damages." Expectation damages will be computed as placing the client in the position that he or she would have been had the DJ not breached. For example, let's say the DJ agreed to a five-hour set at \$200 per hour (total contract price of \$1,000). In the event that the DJ leaves an hour early, the expectation damages would be \$200. The client would also be entitled to any other incidental expenses. For example, in the same scenario, if the DJ leaving early forced the client to keep a wedding planner around for an extra hour, the DJ would be responsible for that cost as well.

MISREPRESENTATION

Misrepresentation is a claim that the DJ intentionally misstated (or omitted) a material term of the contract, strictly for the purposes of getting the client to sign the contract. Most often, this occurs when a DJ misrepresents experience with events involving special cultural knowledge, like Hindu wedding receptions or Bar Mitzvah celebrations. As many professionals know, the DJ must be able to navigate various, sometimes complex rituals and festivities, and be sensitive to what the act represents. Where the DJ "fakes" their resume or puffs up their experience, and then fails to provide services in the manner promised, the client may have grounds to sue for misrepresentation. Misrepresentation is an "intentional tort." So what does that mean? Well, if successfully proven, the client can request "general damages," the legal term for "pain and suffering." This can be very expensive. Ouch!

To sum up, a majority of lawsuits are a direct result of failure by the DJ to effectively communicate with the client. Does the client have a frowny face whenever you grab the mic? Does the client seem confused about what your role is at the event? Speak up now, not later. Taking care of issues before or as they arise is always better, both from a legal standpoint and from a customer relations standpoint. An ounce of prevention equals twenty pounds of lawsuit. Be safe out there! **MB**



Much of attorney Rob Schenk's practice is dedicated to representing and educating wedding professionals, from speaking engagements, to maintaining WeddingIndustryLaw.com, and, of course, to arguing on their behalf in the courtroom.

Buy the Building?

Dear Dave,

I've been renting a 5,000-square-foot space for my small business. I've been at this location for just over a year, and the landlord has asked me if I'd like to buy the entire location. It includes two adjacent tenants, and he's asking between \$150,000 and \$200,000. I'm currently paying \$1,300 a month rent, and that amount would almost cover the monthly mortgage payment if I bought the building. What should I do?

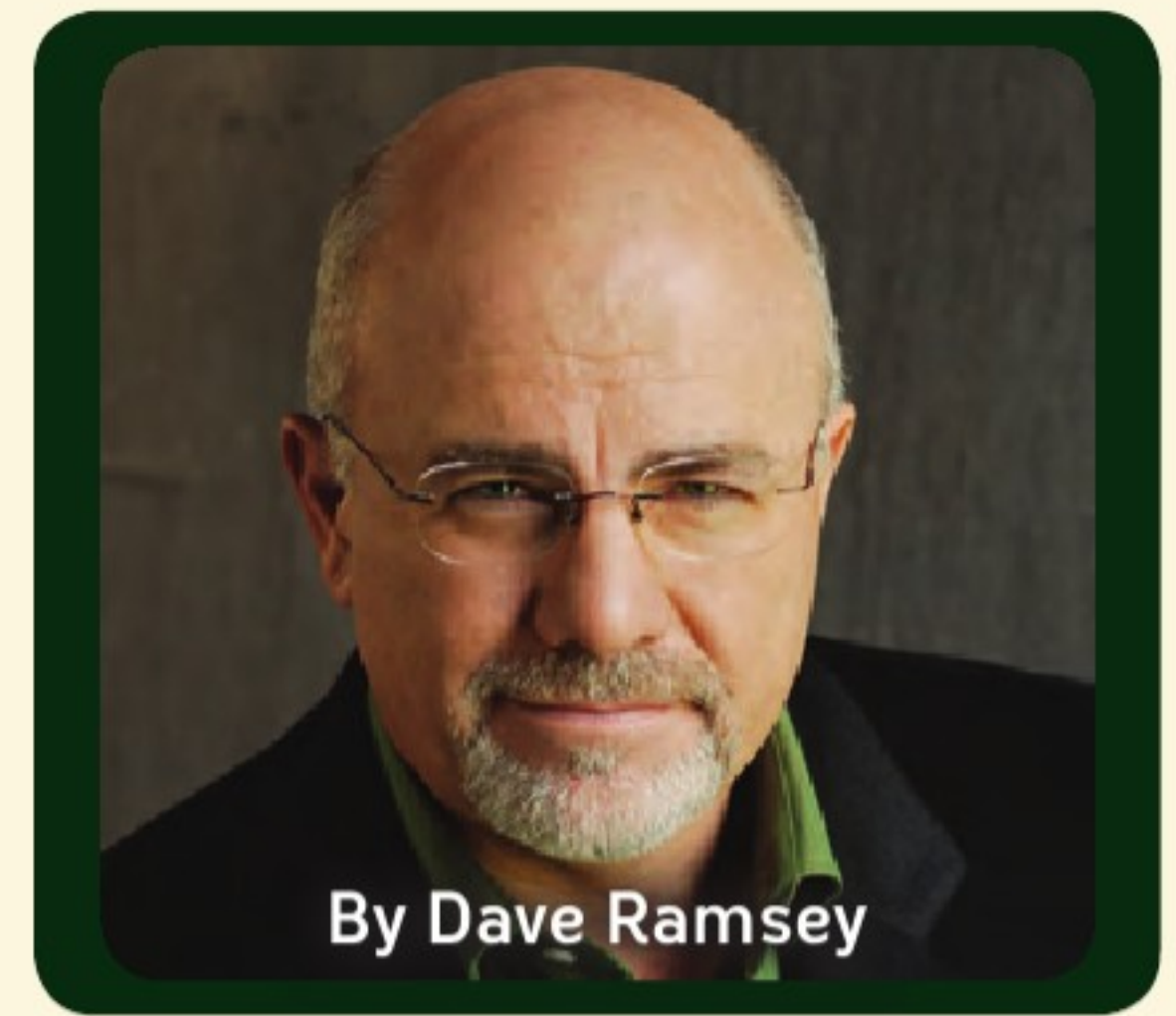
– Tucker

Dear Tucker,

That's the great misnomer about those kinds

of situations. You can get out of a tenant situation pretty easily and move on. But you can't just get out of a mortgage situation and move on without selling the property.

If your business had been around a little longer, and you had the cash to buy it, I might suggest doing this. But there's a problem with buying real estate associated with the operation of your business, and it's one I'm facing myself. I've got a 64,000-square-foot building that our business operates in. I've also leased another 40,000 feet out back from the company that owns it, and I bought another building next door, because we've outgrown the first building. Now, I'm having to fight all the time to make sure I don't conform my business to my building, and instead make the building conform to the business. It's really tempting, in other words,



By Dave Ramsey

to not grow and have to move out of this place we love.

But the problem can be that if the business is growing, is shrinking or hasn't been open long enough to stabilize, a piece of real estate can start being the tail that wags the dog. I love real estate, but I'd remain a tenant in your situation. A) you don't have the money; and B) you haven't been doing this long enough to know what your real estate and physical plant needs are going to be.

– Dave

Mobile Beat Notes:

Many DJ services outgrow storing their gear in the garage. For us at BC Productions it was about 8-10 years ago. And we really had outgrown it before that but couldn't afford to move. At that

point we leased space from another company. We found within 5 years that we needed to make more changes. Until your company settles in well and you can afford to buy it with cash, don't start looking for buying your own digs.

Beware the Entertainment Partnership

Dear Dave,

My buddies and I put a band together, and we've started playing lots of shows and making pretty good money. We all realize the need to start treating the band like a business, so what's the best way to do that?

– Chuck

Dear Chuck,

The first recommendation I have might feel a bit uncomfortable, but I wouldn't set up the business side as a partnership.

Very few partnerships work out smoothly, because of the unavoidable personal and professional drama that creeps into things.

I live in Nashville, and I've seen stuff like this happen more than once. Drama is a business killer, and the bands I know that have been the most successful are the ones that function with a primary or controlling owner. They have someone who owns the band, and the other musicians are employees of the band. You can pay an employee per gig, or even a percentage of the net profits the band is making. You can do a lot of those things, but there's still a question at the end of the day — who owns the name? If the drummer quits, does he get to take stuff with him? You don't want to get into a bunch of that stuff, because in most cases making decisions by committee doesn't work. Just ask the government!

Imagine this. A guy stays with you for three years and shows up late half the time and drunk the other half. He finally quits, and then four months later the band gets a \$2 million record deal. I guarantee you he'll come around wanting a piece of it. That's the kind of drama I'm talking about, and it's something you just don't need from a business aspect.

If you want to agree upon and set up a system where money goes back into the business, that's fine. There's nothing wrong with holding back 20 percent for growing the bank, then splitting the rest between the members. There are lots of formulas you can work from that will provide for the band as a whole and its members. But I don't recommend partnerships at all. And I strongly advise you to stay away from one in a band!

– Dave

Mobile Beat Notes:

A lot of DJ companies start out as partnerships and many of them fail, while some of them do succeed. BC Productions originally was a partnership, when the company only did 10-15 jobs a year. Recently, it has become a partnership again but for a long time

served as a corporation solely owned by myself. I'm in a unique situation with my partner Jake, where our plan is for him to be the owner of the majority share of the company one day. Until then, I would never want to have a 50/50 partnership, because, as Dave says, it's a recipe for trouble. Make sure always there is always a clear majority owner.

*Dave Ramsey is America's trusted voice on money and business. He has authored five New York Times best-selling books, including **EntreLeadership: 20 Years of Practical Business Wisdom from the Trenches**. The **Dave Ramsey Show** is heard by more than 8 million listeners each week on more than 500 radio stations. Find Dave on the web at www.daveramsey.com. **MB***

Advertising Deductions

HOW TO RECOUP SOME OF YOUR MARKETING COSTS

By Mark Battersby

Without advertising or marketing, few would know of the existence of the mobile entertainment business. Fortunately, marketing the mobile entertainment operation doesn't have to mean multi-million-dollar TV commercials or advertising campaigns.

There are, after all, plenty of ways mobile entertainers can expose and market their mobile entertainment businesses—and a variety of tax deductions to help make that marketing and advertising more affordable. Include entertainment in the operation's marketing strategy and tax deductions will also underwrite the fun side of promoting the business.

Advertising, as well as marketing, can mean the continued life of any mobile entertainment business affected by the economy, competition or other factors outside the control of the DJ, VJ, or KJ. Because there are many aspects to both advertising and marketing, it is not surprising that the expenditures related to these activities fall within several sections of the tax regulations.

ADVERTISING EXPENSES

All too often, one of the first expenses reduced or cut by a troubled businesses is the most basic of expenditures—its advertising costs. This is a doubly short-sighted strategy given the necessity of advertising in bad times and the fact that Uncle Sam, in the form of tax deductions, will often pick up a portion of those advertising expenses.

Advertising expenses encompass everything from expenditures for business cards, brochures or catalogs, sponsorships, prizes and contests, the cost of launching a new service and other promotional activities. Generally, advertising, marketing and other selling expenses are immediately tax deductible as "ordinary and necessary" business expenses—but not always.

All reasonable advertising expenses are tax deductible so long as they bear a reasonable relationship to the mobile entertainment



business. Under our tax rules, deductible expenses may be for the purpose of developing good will as well as gaining immediate sales. Even better, the cost of advertising is deductible when paid or

incurred, even though the advertising program extends over several years or is expected to result in benefits extending over a period of years.

LOBBYING EXPENSES

When it comes to promoting the interests of the mobile entertainment business, lobbying expenses directed towards influencing federal or state legislation are generally not deductible. However, this prohibition does not apply to in-house expenses that do not exceed \$2,000 for a tax year. Lobbying expenses pertaining to local legislation are, of course, deductible.

The cost of public service or other impartial advertising, such as advertising designed to encourage the public to register to vote, are also deductible. However, no deduction may be claimed for the expense of advertising in political programs, or for admission to political fund-raising or inaugural functions and similar events. This includes admission to a dinner or program if any part of the proceeds of the event directly or indirectly inures to or for the use of a political party or a political candidate.

WEB SITE DEVELOPMENT COSTS

While the IRS has yet to issue guidelines for website development costs, informal, internal IRS guidance suggests that one appropriate approach is to treat these costs like an item of software and depreciate them over three years.

It is clear that taxpayers who pay large amounts to develop sophisticated sites have been allocating their costs to items such as software development (currently deductible like research and development costs) and currently deductible advertising expense.

RESEARCH AS A TAX DEDUCTION

Testing the waters before committing to an advertising campaign is always advisable. Unfortunately, only costs of research in the laboratory or for experimental purposes (whether carried on by the DJ, VJ, or KJ or on behalf of the mobile entertainment operation by a third party) are tax-deductible. *Market research and normal product testing costs are not research expenditures under the tax rules.*

MAILING LISTS

Mailing lists are an important part of the advertising campaigns of many mobile entertainment businesses. On one hand, the mailing list is an intangible asset, deductible only if a reasonable "life" can be determined. A tax deduction for the cost of compiling that list is a little trickier.

Consider the situation of a mobile entertainment business



Mark E. Battersby is a freelance writer based in the Philadelphia area. His features, columns and reports have appeared in leading trade magazines and professional journals since the early 1980s. When not actually writing, Mark spends most of his time digging for exciting tax and financial strategies to write about.

that mails brochures to individuals and businesses on its mailing list as well as to others on lists that it rents. Prospects developed from the mailing and advertising are added to the operation's mailing list if they engage the operation's services. The business keeps records of its costs in adding to the mailing lists and expenses those costs in the year the brochure to which the expenses relate is distributed.

The IRS has ruled that a business may deduct as an ordinary business expense all of its costs related to adding names to the mailing list. Keep in mind, however, that this situation involved a mailing piece that was published semi-annually. In other cases the IRS has ruled on the brochures, catalogs or mailing pieces involved had a useful life of several years.

MARKETING AS ADVERTISING

In today's world, paid advertising isn't the only way to spread the word about your mobile entertainment business. Public relations are marketing strategies that span everything from press releases and networking at a Chamber of Commerce meeting to sponsoring a contest to holding special events.

Unfortunately, no tax deduction is allowed for dues paid to any club organized for business, pleasure, recreation, or other social purposes—even if membership is used to promote the mobile entertainment business. Fortunately, this disallowance does not extend to professional organizations or public service organizations (e.g., Kiwanis and Rotary clubs).

ENTERTAINMENT

Every professional DJ, VJ, or KJ is allowed a deduction for business entertainment—so long as there is a direct relationship between the expense and the development or expansion of the business. Remember, however, special deduction limits are imposed on some business-related entertainment, meals and gift expenses.

First and foremost, no tax deduction is allowed for the cost of entertaining guests at nightclubs, sporting events, theaters, etc., unless that cost is either: 1) directly related to the active conduct of a trade or business; or 2) for entertainment directly before or after a substantial and bona fide business discussion associated with the conduct of that trade or business.

The business discussion must be the principal aspect of the combined entertainment and business and must represent an active effort by the DJ, VJ, or KJ to obtain income or other specific business benefit. However, if a meal expense directly precedes or follows a substantial and bona fide business discussion (including a business meeting at a convention or trade show), then it is deductible if it is established that the expense was associated with the active conduct of a trade or business. The DJ, VJ, or KJ must, of course, be able to substantiate the expense.

There are two additional restrictions when deducting meal expenses: 1) Meal expenses generally are not deductible if neither the DJ, VJ, KJ, nor his or her employee is present at the meal; and 2) a deduction will not be allowed for food and beverage to the extent that such expense is lavish or extravagant under the circumstances.

50% LIMITATION RULE

The amount allowable as a deduction for meal and entertainment expenses is generally limited to 50% of such expenses. The 50% rule is applied only after determining the amount of the otherwise allowable deductions. For instance, the portion of a meal that is lavish or extravagant must first be subtracted from the meal cost before the 50% reduction is applied.

GIVING IS OFTEN ADVERTISING

Yet another form of advertising is the giving of gifts by the mobile entertainment business. Deductions for business gifts, whether made directly or indirectly, are limited to \$25 per recipient per year. Items clearly of an advertising nature that cost \$4 or less and signs, display racks or other promotional materials given for use on business premises are not gifts.

A mobile entertainment business that provides customers or prospective customers with an item that might be considered either a gift or entertainment will generally benefit from the entertainment write-off, ignoring the \$25 limit. Of course, if the operation gives a customer packaged food or beverages that are to be used later, they are usually considered gifts.

A gift to the spouse of a business customer cannot be treated separately from a gift to the customer him- or herself. Remember, the \$25 limitation applies to gifts made "directly or indirectly" to an individual. A gift made to the spouse of a business customer of the taxpayer is generally considered as made indirectly to the customer. Naturally, if the customer's spouse has an independent business connection with the mobile entertainment operation, a gift would not be regarded as an indirect gift unless it was intended for first customer's eventual use or benefit.

Obviously, reaping the maximum benefits from advertising and marketing expenditures or locking in cost-cutting deductions, often requires the help of qualified professionals. Whether such help includes marketing or advertising professionals, or is limited to a qualified tax professional, the decision of whether to advertise or market the mobile entertainment operation's services should be a "no brainer," good times or bad. **MB**



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"Close" the Sale?

EH, NO SPARKY. IT'S "EARN" THE SALE

By Jeffrey Gitomer

It never ceases to amaze me how many people still ask me, "What's the best way to close a sale?"

Other than cold calling and finding the pain, this is one of the biggest misconceptions in sales. It's not a technique. It's not a manipulation. It's not something that you wait until the end of your presentation to do. It's not something that requires intimate timing. You don't have to be afraid of being rejected.

What you have to do is have an intelligent and engaging conversation with someone who is looking to buy you and your product or service—a conversation that involves value, a win for them, a visualized outcome, and an understanding that the sale is made emotionally and then justified logically.

That's a far cry from "closing."

MAJOR AHA! If the sale doesn't start right, it will never end right.

"Close the sale" is the wrong thought process. The prospective customer is making his or her decision AS the sales call progresses.

Truth will win you more sales than manipulation.

If you're really wanting to complete the sale (aka "getting the order," aka "creating an atmosphere in which the customer will buy") there are questions you must answer for yourself in order to increase the chances the sale can be yours.

CAUTION: When you ask yourself these questions, and your own answers come up short of mastery, it's an indication of why you lose sales. The better and stronger you answer each one, the more likely you are to make the sale.

Think about your last ten sales calls, and ask yourself:

- How prepared were you in terms of the customer?
- How ready were you to make a sale?
- How friendly were you?
- How enthusiastic were you?
- How emotionally engaging were you?
- How intellectually engaging were you?
- How self-confident were you?
- How relatable were you?
- How compelling was your presentation?
- How different were you perceived to be?
- How valuable were you perceived to be?
- How believable were you?
- How trustworthy were you perceived to be?

Close the sale? No! It's not an action. It's a culmination and sum total of the elements that makes a favorable decision possible.

The close of a sale is a delicate balance between your words

and deeds, and their thoughts and perceptions. And a sale is ALWAYS made—either you sell them on yes, or they sell you on no.

SECRET: You give me a prepared, friendly, enthusiastic, emotionally-engaging, intellectually-engaging, unique, valuable, compelling, believable, self-confident, relatable, trustworthy salesperson...And I'LL GIVE YOU A SALE! No close needed.

- It is NOT the responsibility of the salesperson to CLOSE the sale.
- It is the responsibility of the salesperson to *engage* the prospect.
- It is not the responsibility of the salesperson to CLOSE the sale.
- It is the responsibility of the salesperson to *prove value* to the prospect.
- It is not the responsibility of the salesperson to CLOSE the sale.
- It is the responsibility of the salesperson to *prove differentiation* to the prospect.
- It is not the responsibility of the salesperson to CLOSE the sale.
- It is the responsibility of the salesperson to *EARN* the sale.

There have been more words written about closing the sale than any other aspect of the selling process or the sales cycle. Most of it is manipulative rubbish. Most of it centers on your ability to push the prospect into a corner and make them feel pressured to make a decision. That pressure will often result in a no, or some kind of stall that will ultimately result in a no.

I've just given you an accurate dose of just who is responsible for making a sale, and how it should be completed.

NOTE WELL: By using this approach to selling you have just eliminated all of the silly objections and stalls. Price too high, need to think it over, we all meet next week and will decide then, call me next Tuesday, send me a proposal, yada, yada, yada.

Yes, I too have written a ton of information on "closing the sale." You can find it in *The Sales Bible*, *The Little Red Book of Selling*, *The 21.5 Unbreakable Laws of Selling*, and various blog posts and webinars. All of that information is in harmony with my philosophy: zero manipulation and build a trusting relationship.

THE KEY: Be comfortable with yourself. If you're in a selling situation and you aren't feeling the love, or feeling the comfort, or feeling the relationship, or feeling the mutual communication, then the best thing to do is back off, and be truthful. Truth will win you more sales than manipulation. All you have to do to change and improve your outcome is change your mindset from "close" to "earn." **MB**

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Jeffrey Gitomer is the author of twelve best-selling books, including *The Sales Bible* and *The Little Red Book of Selling*. His bestselling *21.5 Unbreakable Laws of Selling* is now available as a book and an online course at www.gitomervt.com. For public event dates and information about training and seminars visit www.gitomer.com or email Jeffrey at salesman@gitomer.com.

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We Both Win!

ESPECIALLY IN HIRING, KNOWING HOW TO REACH WIN-WIN IS KEY

By Jason Weldon

Most of us like to win. Success is a metric that can be determined by many different things, as we each have our own version of it. But ultimately, being successful in something is the goal.

We don't really start a business just for the fun of it. That would be considered a hobby. We want to be the best, live out our dreams, be inspired, do good work and, in the end, be able to say we made a difference.

For many successful business owners the art of negotiation is a vital skill. But very few of us are actually good at it. I for one find this to be one of the top business skills that I constantly have to work on. I negotiate every day. Sometimes I win, sometimes I lose. Sometimes I don't even know if I won or lost! And I am willing to bet many of you reading this now are right there with me.

Now I am not talking about being able to negotiate buying a car, or getting a cheaper price at a yard sale. That is haggling. And that is annoying. I am talking about a real negotiation. Something like buying a house, developing the deal of a new hire or dealing with your kids getting a chore done. Something where the stakes mean a little more than saving \$250.

A little while back, I was taking a class in negotiation and I was shocked at how bad I was. I mean horrible. I had all the wrong reasons for how to go about it and I did all the wrong homework, only to be called out in front of my peers. But I learned a valuable lesson and I thought it was important to share.

I was given a task. And I was given a certain set of instructions to follow. And boy did I follow them. I followed them so much so that neither the person I was negotiating with or myself ended up with anything. We both "lost" as they say. And that was the first lesson I learned in a successful negotiation. We both have to win. We both have to come out feeling as if we are in a better position and got what we wanted.

For most of you reading this, one of the biggest negotiating moments in our business lives would be when we are going to hire someone. And for many people that don't own a business, negotiating their salary is one of their biggest moments. Both of you expect to win and both of you expect to come out happy.

But you both have two totally different approaches on how that will happen and what your goal is. How much do you pay them? What kinds of benefits are they looking for? What kind of office environment do they want? How important is the culture of where they are working? Do they get Fridays off? All sorts of things are going to be presented. And we, as business owners, make the one mistake I made. We don't listen.

Listening to the other party, on the other side of the table, with all the things they want, is the single most important thing you can do at a negotiation. We already understand that having them win and having us win is the number one goal. So the best way to ensure this is going to happen is to shut up and listen to them talk. Watch their body language. Pay attention to how they are holding themselves. Just listen.

As you listen to them, they will tell you all the things they really want. It is your job to stop and ask them questions to get more clarity about what they are saying. The more questions you ask, the more information you have. The more information you

have, the better the chances you will get the outcome that you want—and provide them with the outcome they want. You will learn exactly what it is that you need to know. And sometimes, most of the time, you have to be creative.

In my case, I wasn't creative. I was so thick headed. I didn't want to listen to anybody

around me and I just wanted to win. A pretty stupid way of going about it. If I would have just asked a few more questions, listened to a few more responses and took the time to creatively come up with a solution, I would have been in a much better position.

For those that are headed toward hiring someone, try some of the tactics below to help better your chances of making it a win-win for both of you.

Goals: State very clear goals about what you want. Don't be vague. Don't give roundabout answers. Be clear, be confident and be concise. Ask them what their goals are as well.

Alternatives: Always have an alternative. If you don't have one, you may just go about hiring anyone that comes in the door.

Be Honest: Don't play games. Don't make them say their number first. Be confident in what you are looking for and answer the questions they want answered. Sleazy gets you nowhere.

Be Fair: People are always nervous when it comes to negotiating, so make sure to make them feel comfortable. People know it isn't going to be easy, but they can respect fair. Be prepared for what you are going to say and how you will get the information you need.

One of the best books I've read on this was Richard Shell's *Bargaining for Advantage*. If you want to get a good fundamental base on negotiating, this book will really help. Enjoy! **MB**



Jason Weldon is a wedding business consultant who specializes in small to medium-sized companies that want to grow their business. His objective is to help guide people through organizing their thoughts and laying the groundwork for a better, more successful start-up. He currently lives in Philadelphia and is also the president of Synergetic Sound and Lighting, Inc. and DJ and A/V company.



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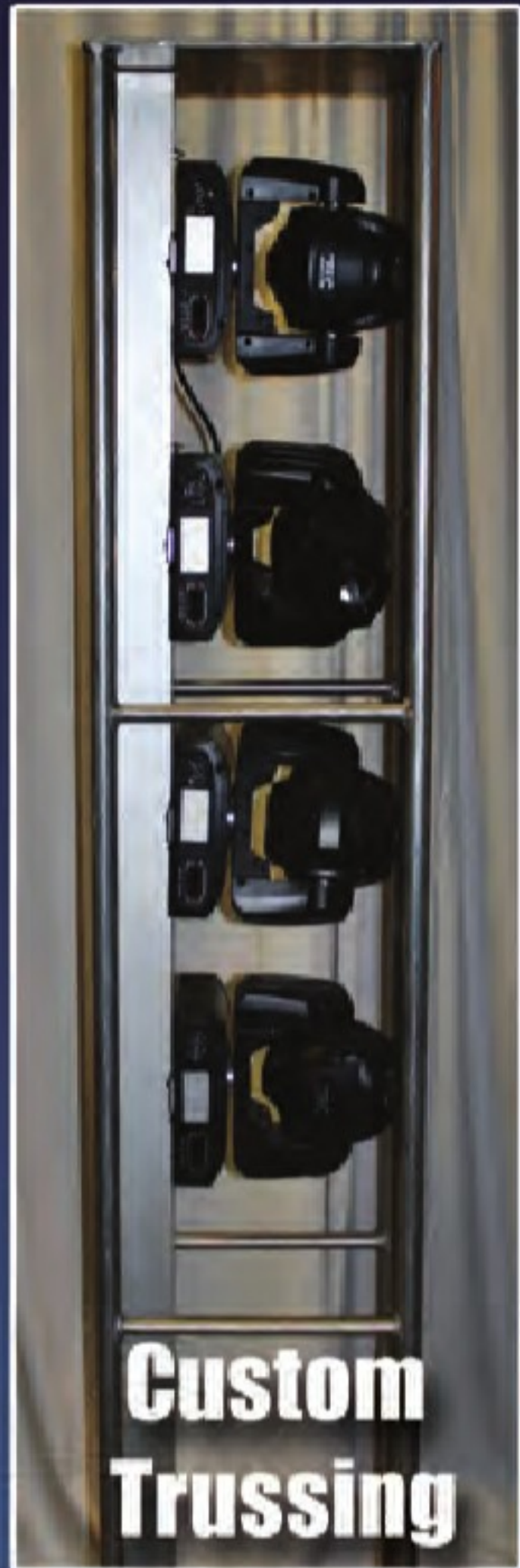
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